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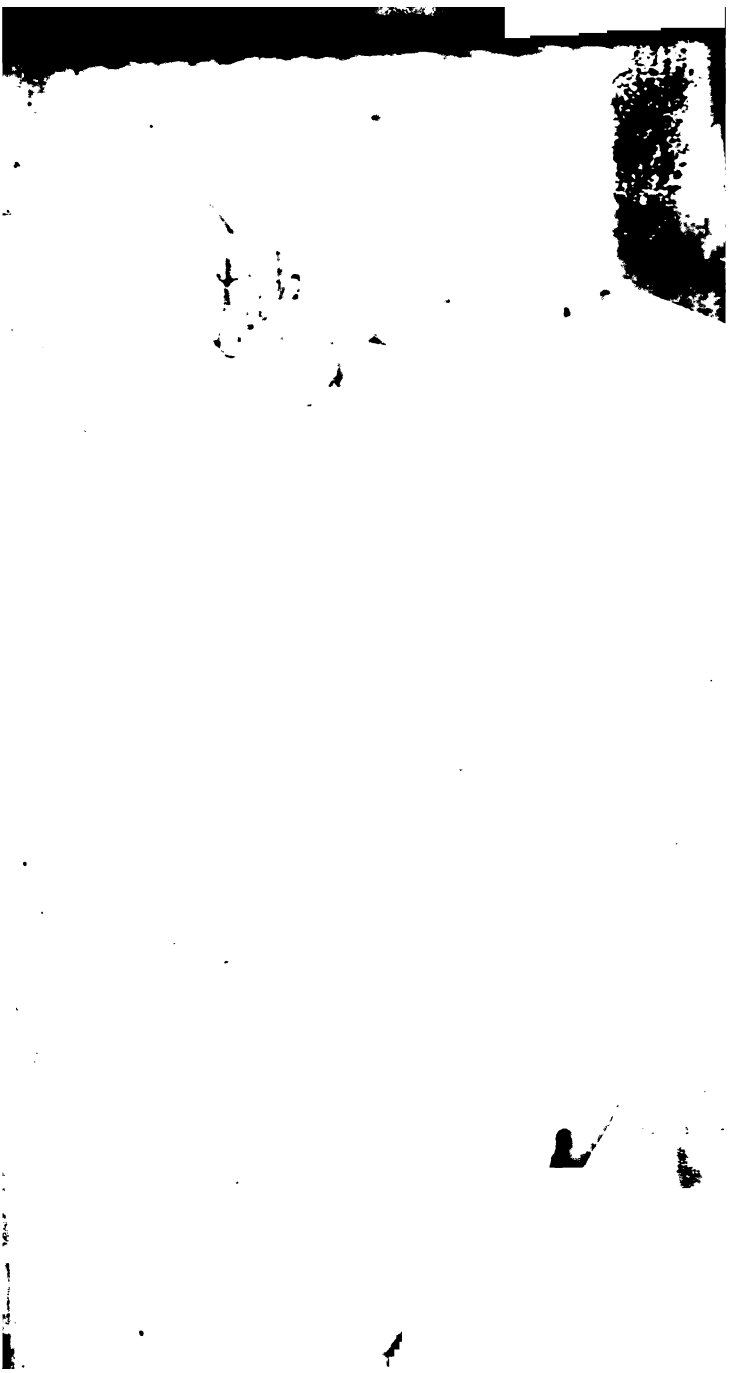

# THE CONVICT;

OR,

## NAVY LIEUTENANT.

VOL. I.

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# THE CONVICT,

OR

## NAVY LIEUTENANT.

*A NOVEL.*

*By Mrs. PARSONS,*

AUTHOR OF

THE MISER AND HIS FAMILY; MURRAY HOUSE;
THE MYSTERIOUS VISIT, &c. &c. &c.

"The ways of Heaven, though dark,
Are just; and oft' some guardian pow'r
Attends unseen, to save the innocent."

———"And, Oh! in whatever garb misfortune approaches my door, may humanity be in waiting, ready to lift the latch, and give her comfort!"

FOUR VOLUMES.

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# THE CONVICT;

OR,

## NAVY LIEUTENANT.

### CHAPTER I.

"Feeling does not stay to calculate with weights, and balance the importance and magnitude of every object that excites it:—it flows impetuous from the heart, without consulting the cooler responses of the understanding."

MR. Henry Thompson was the third son of a country curate, and had been placed in the navy at eleven years of age, to make his way progressively in his profession, without the smallest hope of assistance from interest or fortune.

At the age of two-and-twenty, having gone through all the usual gradations in the service, he had the supreme delight of being honoured with a lieutenant's commission, as a reward for his bravery in a distinguished action, which *could not be overlooked*, though eleven years service had been little regarded.

With honest pride and secret exultation he was ready to join his ship immediately, which lay at Portsmouth, under sailing orders for the East-Indies. He had taken his place on the outside of the coach for Sunday evening, having resolved to call in the morning on an old mess-mate, formerly a surgeon's mate when he was a young midshipman, but who fortunately meeting with a widow who had some money, and a snug little shop, he had wisely retired from the dangers of the sea, and with small hopes of making any figure in the medical line, instead of being a vender of drugs, he was contented to station himself behind the counter

counter as the master of a snuff and tobacco *warehouse*, the name of *shop* being sunk immediately on his marriage, into the former more dignified appellation.

Our lieutenant, little versed in the fashionable mode of overlooking an old acquaintance when riches or preferment exalts a man into consequence with himself and the world, cheerfully exclaimed, as he viewed his figure in the glass, armed at all points in his spick and span new suit of uniform,—

"Dash my buttons! how little Sam Barton will crow to see me in this coat!—He was an honest hearted fellow, and wished me well, and though they called him a land-lubber, for deserting his post and selling quids of tobacco, yet I can remember he was *very kind to me*, and therefore I'll walk this morning and beat up his quarters."

One small difficulty occurred, indeed, he did not know the house; but it was in

Clerkenwell parish, and he supposed any one round the neighbourhood would know little Sam Barton's snuff shop, and though it was above four years since Sam had married, and the quondam messmates had seen each other, he was very sure he should know his old friend the moment he cast eyes on him.

In full confidence, and in great spirits, our hero sallied forth, strutted up Ludgate-Hill, and proceeded along the Old-Bailey on his search through Clerkenwell parish; when, most fortunately, before he had reached the corner of the street, he saw a man hastily advancing towards him, who, in spite of time and the alteration in figure and dress, he actually recognized as his ship-mate, Sam.

His figure and new uniform had also attracted the eye of Mr. Barton, who was earnestly looking at him, as the lieutenant made a quick step or two and seized his hand,—"What cheer, my lad?—Honest Sam,

Sam, I rejoice to see thee,—why I was cruising with all speed to shake hands with an old acquaintance before I join ship."

By this time Mr. Barton had perfectly recollected him, cordially shook hands, and expressed high satisfaction at his promotion. —"I will turn back," said he, "for I hope you mean to dine with me; and I take it very kindly that you have not forgot an old mess-mate."

"You never knew me a shark in your life, Sam.—I shall dine with you to be sure, as I want to know your good woman, who has given you such a snug birth; for to say truth, your's was a cursed ugly painful sort of an employment on board, and must have cost you some heart achs when you had to lop off the limbs of poor honest hearted fellows, and turn them adrift lame for life.—But that's not here or there now.—Where are you bound to,—can I go with you? for it signifies nothing to go back, if you have a cruise in view."

"I was a going," rejoined Barton, "to the chapel here, in the Old-Bailey, to hear what I am sure will be an excellent and an affecting sermon, addressed to the unhappy condemned felons who are to be executed to-morrow."

The lieutenant paused for a moment, then taking the arm of his friend, he said abruptly, — "I'll go with you. — Poor souls!—I'll go with you; I am commanding officer now of my time and my actions, and so I'll accompany you, for I like a good sermon as well as any man."

They accordingly repaired to the chapel, where they heard a most affecting discourse, from a worthy man, suitable to the occasion, and addressed particularly to the wretched beings before him.—Nor was his pious exhortations without effect, the far greater part of the congregation were in tears, and among them our hero, whose heart was filled with the milk of human kindness, and whose eyes had been alternately

nately directed to the preacher, and the unhappy, melancholy, and many almost naked condemned criminals, whose looks bespoke their internal anguish.

He could not suppress the sigh, and sympathetic drop that fell on his manly cheek, and when the service was over, paced into the yard with a slow and melancholy step.

Presently a sort of buz round him, and the words,—"Make way for her," caused him to stop and turn round, when he beheld a very decent dressed female, whose air, figure, and countenance commanded attention, and whose deepened distress and anguished haste spoke superior wretchedness, hastily piercing through the crowd, throwing a wild look on every side, and in a voice that caused universal terror, she shrieked violently, and then exclaimed,—"Where, oh! where is my child?"

Not a single being in the place, but what halted, and seemed to feel for the unhappy

mother.—In the same moment a woman advanced with a female infant, cleanly dressed and apparently about two years old, which she delivered into the arms of the poor sufferer without speaking a single word.—The child flung its arms round her neck, and hid its little face in her bosom.

No language can describe the wild agonizing look of its miserable mother as she pressed it to her breast, and kissed it with that extreme tenderness and passion, as if she would dwell on its lips for ever. To that ecstasy succeeded another equally violent and affecting—she burst into the bitterest agonies of tears and exclamations.

"*Is this, is this the last time?* shall I never, never kiss those lips again, never see thee more?—Oh, God! oh, God! what have I done—what has the cruelty and perfidy of man brought upon me!—Oh, my child! my child! disclaimed, deserted! —Wretched, unhappy wretch! what misery hast thou brought upon this poor innocent!—

nocent!—Who will save *thee* from want and a miserable death?"

"*I, I will!*" exclaimed our lieutenant, catching the child from her arms, as the agonized woman sank on the ground, overcome by the violence of her feelings, "*I will save and protect your child,* so help me God!—Look up, my poor sufferer, I will be a father to this babe, whilst I have a shilling in my pocket."

Surprise, joy, and a thousand nameless sensations darted from her eyes, as she feebly raised her head. She caught his hand and passionately kissed it,—"*You* have humanity," said she, "all men are not villains.—Father of Mercy!" clasping her hands to Heaven, "bless, bless my child, and her protector!" She put her hand in her pocket and drew out a roll of paper,—"Take this, pity, forgive a miserable being, and save, save my poor babe!"

Again she wildly snatched it to her arms, and pressed it to her bosom; when no

longer able to support the terrible agonies of nature, she was seized with strong convulsions, and the shrieking infant fell from her eager grasp.

Not a soul present but what felt for this most unhappy mother; many of the felons, who seemed dead to the horrors of their own fate, sent forth sighs and tears at this affecting scene. — The keepers behaved with tenderness and humanity; our lieutenant, who had stood the brunt of many a well fought engagement without shrinking, was now overcome, and whilst with trembling arms he regained the fallen child, large drops fell on its face as he hugged it to his breast.

The convulsions gaining strength on the weakened frame of the unhappy sufferer, it was supposed they were her last agonies, and she was carried off to receive what help could be offered, though with a conviction to every one, that all human aid would be in vain.

The

The crowd instantly dispersed, except a few, who struck by the humanity of our hero, resolved to watch where he went with his little unfortunate protegée.

"Ah, God bless the sailors!" cried an aged man, "they fight like lions for their king and country, but they have hearts like lambs to relieve distress and misery.—God bless you, young master! may you never know sorrow, and may that poor babe live to love and serve you."

The lieutenant turned, his heart dilated with pleasure, he put half a crown into the man's hand, nodded his head, and pushed through the crowd with his prize, followed by Barton, who had not spoken a single word till then.—"Why we shall have a mob at our heels," said he, "we had best take a coach."

No sooner said than done, a coach was hailed, and ordered to drive fast to Red-Lion-Street, Clerkenwell. By this means they

they escaped the crowd, and peaceably arrived at their destined port.

"Well, Thompson," said Barton, "you have made a hasty purchase; what the plague do you mean to do with the child? how can you afford to maintain it?"

"By knocking off some of my expences, and living frugal," answered Thompson. "Why, man, I have five shillings a day now, less than half served me before; and I shall never repent saving a shilling from myself, to support this poor orphan. I tell you what, Sam, I would rather face a three-decker, and have the balls whizzing about my ears, than ever behold such another scene as that unhappy woman went through. The Lord will have mercy upon her,—whatever may be her sins, great are her sufferings; and may eternal goodness grant her a safe birth in Heaven, and bless me, as I will protect her child."

Barton was silenced; he was not devoid of good nature or humanity, but he had acquired

acquired some *worldly knowledge* in the four years he had been married, and kept a tobacco warehouse. He knew the value of money, and how inadequate five shillings a day was to support the character of a gentleman and a king's officer;—their uniforms, their mess, their unavoidable expences, and the common chance of being sent on expensive stations, where their daily pittance was insufficient to procure their daily subsistence.

"Ah, poor Thompson!" thought he, "being made a lieutenant he fancies he has found a gold mine. Lord help him! with such a soft heart, he'll soon be dished, and the poor child will be turned adrift in spite of himself, when he gets in debt, and perhaps put under the hatches.—'Tis all sunshine with him now, but he will soon see the clouds lower, and have a storm overtake him before he is aware of it."

Whilst Barton was thus mentally soliloquizing, the self-approving mind of his companion

companion was no less earnestly engaged in devising ways and means for the protection of his adopted child.

The forcible impulse of humanity which had dictated, "*I, I* will save and protect your child," and the consequent grateful agonies of its wretched mother, had rendered him insensible to the person who brought the child; and whether she had voluntarily disappeared among the crowd, or in her care for the poor criminal had been equally unobservant of him, he could not decide, but he now regretted that he had not noticed her, and that he was even unacquainted with the name of his little charge.

In this taciturn way, the coach stopped at Barton's door, before they had recovered speech; and with the child in his arms, the lieutenant was introduced to the *gentle*-woman of the house, as "an old friend and mess-mate, who kindly came to take the luck of the pot."

Mrs.

Mrs. Barton received him civilly, but with a look of surprise at his protegée, who, though perfectly clean, was not in habiliments correspondent with the handsome new suit of uniform of its supposed father; and that in such a dress he should carry his child, seemed, "to her thinking," not much like a gentleman.

"Well, Mary," said her husband, "can little Sall take the babe from my friend, for I think his arms may ache by this time?"

"She is getting the dinner," answered she coldly, "but the child looks as if it could walk.—Can't it walk, Sir?"

"Indeed I don't know," replied Thompson, "whether it can stand or not, but we'll see."—He made an effort to place it on the ground, the little girl screamed and clung round his neck.

"Strange," observed Barton, "that the poor thing has taken such a fancy to you already;—but perhaps a piece of bread and butter may tempt it, for I dare say it can

can stand."—He called Sall to bring the tempting bit, while Mrs. Barton, with a look of astonishment, seemed rooted to the spot.

Thompson was caressing the child to restore its quietude, and Barton was deliberating how to break the business to his wife, who was not the most peaceable of women, nor at all fond of children, possibly from being no mother by either of her husbands.

He knew also her civility was proportioned to her interest, and confined solely to those who "paid their way in a regular manner," and however the new uniform and rank of his friend might procure *him* a welcome, he much doubted whether it would be extended to his protegée, under its disastrous circumstances.

Before her surprise and curiosity had found words to ask questions, the bread and butter was brought in, and Barton asking the child to come and take it, she readily suffered

suffered herself to be put down, and walking with tolerable steadiness to him, took the piece offered her, and then looking all round pronounced the word—"Mamma."

That word electrified the lieutenant,—"Poor dear lamb!" exclaimed he, "where shall I find a mamma for you?"

"What then," asked Mrs. Barton, "has the little creature lost its mamma?"

"Oh, yes, for ever!" rejoined he. "Barton, what is to be done?—I must leave town this night, it is impossible for me to take it with me, though I shall grieve to leave it;—but if your good wife can recommend any woman to take care of it, I will leave an order with you on my agent for its support."

Mrs. Barton was never deaf, when any thing like profit was sounded in her ears; she supposed the lieutenant's wife was dead, he just come from sea, and at a loss how to provide for this child.—It would be no great

great trouble, Sall had time enough on her hands to look after it, and she might as well make a trifle of money this way as any other.—These ideas passed rapidly through her brain, and while Barton was studying for an answer, she enquired how much Mr. Thompson would allow for its support?

"Whatever is customary or you think right," answered he, eagerly.

"Why, to be sure, it cannot be less than thirty shillings a month," returned she; "if you will ensure that, I don't much care if I take the dear little lamb myself."

"Will you, my dear good woman," exclaimed he, shaking her hand heartily, "then I shall be happy. Yes, I will order my agent to pay you thirty shillings monthly, with a thousand thanks;—and I have besides, about seventy pounds prize money in his hands, and if I die that shall be secured for the child, and you, Sam, must be its trustee."

"Hold,

"Hold, hold," cried Barton, *a little* conscience stricken that his generous messmate should thus straiten himself by, what he thought, too great an allowance; "I shall not consent to your paying thirty shillings a month, one guinea is sufficient till you have a command, and *then* you shall make an addition."

"Pray, Mr. Barton," cried his helpmate, "don't *you* go for to make the gentleman appear shabby, when he is ready to pay that money, which I am sure isn't a six-pence too much for the child's keep; and let me tell you, you have no business in the world to talk when I gave you a good house, a shop in full trade, and all for nothing, for you knows you had not fifty pounds in the world then, and so I must tell you ——"

"No, don't,—don't say a word more," rejoined Thompson, "since I am resolved to pay what you first asked, and thank you too; and every kindness you shew the ch[illegible]

I shall not be behind hand to acknowledge in a proper way.—The poor thing will want cloaths, so I must give you an order too for money to rig it out decently, how much will do?"

Barton was going to speak, his wife stopped him,—"You know nothing about them there things, so hold *your* tongue.—Why I dares to say it will take a matter of six pounds to cloath it decently."

"Well, well, I'll give you an order for *ten*, that it may not want cloathing before I come again."

"Depend upon it, Sir, I will regard it as if it were my own;—and now, pray what am I to call it, what is its name, pretty creature?"

Poor Thompson was struck à la morte, he had never once thought of a name;—before he could reply, little Sall came to ask if she should take up dinner, and Mrs. Barton went immediately to the kitchen.

On

On her quitting the room, Barton, putting his hand on the lieutenant's shoulder, said,—"You *must see*, that my "snug birth" is sometimes subject to a few storms; my wife is a little proud of her "shop in full trade," nevertheless she is not bad tempered *upon the whole*, and I will take care the poor child shall be well looked after, for if *she is not kind to it*, I will place it some where else, so make yourself easy on that score.—But don't say how you came by the child, it might make her shy to it; give it your own name as a relation, leave me to make out the story."

"Aye, do, do," cried Thompson, "for I am a bad hand at such things, and suppose we call her Frances, it was my own good mother's name."

"Very well thought of," returned Barton, "Frances Thompson.—Little Fanny," added he, kissing the child, who was playing with a small terrier dog, and seemed perfectly easy and at home.

Mrs.

Mrs. Barton presently returned, preceding her roast leg of mutton; her countenance cleared up, a smile of kindness played on her face, and the very tone of her voice was changed from a sulky coldness to the soothing one of attentive civility.

The sweet babe must be seated by her—it should call her mamma—yes, and were she to have fifty children this should be considered as her eldest;—but, dear me, what was its name?

"Fanny Thompson," answered Barton, "she is a niece of my friend's, and has lost both her parents."

"Lord, how shocking!—Well, luckily for her she has a good uncle, a gentleman every inch of him, that she was sure of, and little Fanny would have *kind parents in them now*.—But you are sure, Mr. Thompson, your agent will pay the money?"

"Yes, quite sure," replied Thompson, "howsoever I'll write a bit of a line to him,

him, as well as giving Sam the order.—Ten pounds to be paid to-morrow, and thirty shillings a month, that's the bargain I believe. He has seventy pounds in stock, and will receive my pay; and may I never get a snug birth above there, if I desert the little one, or wrong you."

Barton, who well knew the principles of his quondam mess-mate, heartily shook his hand,—"My dear Harry, your word's as good as your bond, and whilst I live poor little Fanny shan't want a friend."

"Thank ye, thank ye," rejoined the lieutenant; and heaving a deep sigh,—"Ah, Barton, the poor mother!" The tear glistened in his eye.

"Yes," returned Sam, hastily, giving him a wink, which the other instantly understood, "yes, 'tis a great loss to be sure; but death is a debt we must all pay, whether at sea or on shore, so don't talk any more that way."

Thompson took the hint, and was silent; while Mrs. Barton, wonderfully courteous, produced some hollands, to drink health and success to the good gentleman, and a blessing on little Fanny.

The hour arrived for our hero's departure; his baggage, he said, was already safely stowed in the hold of the coach. He took little Fanny in his arms, the tears dropped on his cheek as he kissed and blessed her. The little creature threw her arms round his neck, and clung fast to him, as Mrs. Barton attempted to take her. —"Pretty soul," said she, "see, it knows its uncle,—aye, aye, blood will shew itself, one may always tell by a child's fondness who are its relations;—but never mind, Sir, she will soon be as fond of me, who doat on children."

With difficulty Thompson tore himself from the child, who cried violently as he ran out of the house.—"Oh! Sam," exclaimed he, "my heart aches for this poor little

little one,—do let us call and enquire after its miserable mother."

To this Barton agreed; and on the enquiry being made, they were told she was in raving fits, and the doctor did not expect she would hold out the night.

"What was her crime? and what her name?" asked the lieutenant.

"Why she broke into a house and fired at a gentleman, and though she did not kill him outright, she wounded him very sorely, and vowed she would murder him; and so the assault, Sir, and the intent to kill, is one and the same thing as if he had died on the spot. As to her name, they say she was a gentlewoman born, and was brought here by the name of Thompson."

The lieutenant was struck mute—Sam stared;—"Well, devil take me," said he, "if this ben't some how the most curious thing in the world; what say you, Harry?"

"Come

"Come along," answered Thompson, "bear a hand, I have no time to lose;—and so you think the poor woman *will die?*"

"Yes, yes," answered the man, "*there's no fear of that*;—if she dies to-night she'll cheat the hangman, otherwise she is sure to swing for it to-morrow."

Thompson pulled the arm of his friend, and they went on several yards without speaking. At length exclaimed Barton,—"Why, friend Harry, isn't it a comical thing that the girl's name be Thompson? I should not wonder if it had been christened Fanny too.—Why don't you speak, man?"

"Why I be dumbfounded," replied Thompson, "to hear of that poor creature's sad case; and to be called Thompson too, why who would have thought the little one *had a right to the name?*—I'll tell you what, Sam, there's a good Providence, as father used to say, above there, who guides us all through the storms of life; and never doubt

doubt but his hand sent me to that melancholy place to save my poor little namesake."

"Aye, thanks to me though; if you hadn't met me, you know, you would never have gone into Newgate."

"Mayhap not, but still it was the work of Providence that we should meet; and so I plainly perceive, d'ye see, that it is my duty to be a father to the child, though not lawfully mine. God forgive the poor woman, and the poor babe shall never want a friend while Harry Thompson lives; all I can get, or save, shall be her's,—here's my hand upon *that*, messmate. To you and your wife I leave her till we meet again."

An acquaintance of Barton's now joined them, and they had no further conversation until they arrived at the inn, where the lieutenant had bespoke a bed to sleep a few hours.—"The coach goes off very early in the morning," said he, "and as I am

not used to the motion of these here land frigates, I reckon that I shall be heartily tired of their jostling, so may as well have a little rest beforehand. I have taken my place aloft, however, because I like to see good sea room, and which way we steer our course; not to be crammed into the hold of such cock boats, where there is no breathing room, and only port holes to make one's escape if we should chance to founder."

Barton approved of his foresight; and now heartily shaking hands with his quondam messmate, Thompson gave him a fervent benediction, with his kind love to *good* Mrs. Barton, and commended poor Fanny to their joint protection, as the child of Providence, till it pleased God to bring him back once more to his native land, when she should be the child of his bosom.

Honest Sam, whose heart beat in unison with his young friend's, was much affected at

at parting, and slowly returned to his notable spouse; whose assumed good humour had not held out long after Thompson left the house,—for little Fanny was not easily pacified, crying continually for mamma. Mrs. Barton, though very fond of money, was not at all fond of children, —"The squalling brat made her head ache; and how was she to mind shop with a child bawling about her?"

Little Sall, with more good nature, at length coaxed the little thing quiet, and conveyed her to her own bed.

By the time Barton made his appearance the child was asleep; and his wife sat counting her gains out of the ten pounds given to her to clothe her charge.

"Well, Mary," said he, "I have seen my friend fairly off; he's as good a fellow as ever stept between stem and stern,—many a hard gale have we weathered together, and I rejoice heartily that he's promoted at last.—Where's the child?"

"Why gone to sleep to be sure, and plague enough I had to stop its bawling, but Sall coaxed it off at last, after much ado."

"Well, my dear," rejoined Barton, "as d'ye see Providence has given us none of our own, this is a God-send, and we must love and cherish it, like as if it be our own, seeing too that you'll be well paid for its keep, poor thing."

"As to that, Mr. Barton, I desires as how you wont trouble your head about any such thing; I have got to keep it upon a poor pittance enough, and I wonder you wasn't ashamed for to go for to significate that thirty shillings a month was too much.—Too much indeed! I ought to have axed two guineas, only I was a mind to be charitable to the uncle, as it was no child of his own."

"Well, well, my dear," replied Sam, "I know you will be kind and charitable to

to it; and the first thing will be to get clothes for the poor little one."

"There again! you must be putting in your oar, as if I don't know what's first to be done. I shall desire you'll mind shop to-morrow, while I goes and gets the money, and buys a few things for it.—I must be very aconomist to manage the money, I can tell you that, for all your sinuations as if he allowed too much indeed."

Sam was too well acquainted with the eloquence of his lady, to provoke any further words on the subject; and depended more upon little Sall's good-nature, than his wife's kindness, for good treatment of the child. He, however, was determined to consider it as his own, nor by any means to drop the least intimation of having known more of the child than what had been communicated to her.

All he dreaded was, that the singularity of the lieutenant's humanity in such a public place, should be talked of, and reach

Mrs. Barton's ears; he therefore carefully concealed his being at the chapel, and determined to make no further enquiries relative to the unhappy woman, lest he should be noticed as concerned in the transaction in the prison yard.

The following day Mrs. Barton sallied forth on her double errand; and to prove her "*aconomy*," she bought one suit of necessaries for the little girl, as "she could turn some of her old things to make up for proper changes." She therefore laid out the sum of seventeen shillings and sixpence for Fanny, and bought herself a new gown, "in the room of an old one she should cut up for the child." She returned in good humour, and found Barton and his young charge playing together with great harmony.

He had in the mean time seen a person in the shop who had been attending the executions; and carelessly asking how many had suffered, the man answered,—"Only three wicked rogues; there was to have

have been a woman hung, but she went out of her mind yesterday, and they say is dying in her bed, so they could not *hang her to-day*."

Barton enquired no further; and pleased to see his wife come back in good humour, and with having by kind promises to Sall, engaged her to take care and be tender of little Fanny, he was determined to preserve the peace, by a perfect approbation of Mrs. Barton's management, without presuming to ask any questions relative to money matters. This forbearance was properly appreciated by the good lady, as a tacit acknowledgment of her superior wisdom in all *aconomy* matters. In this peaceable way we shall leave Mr. and Mrs. Barton to take care of their shop, and their little charge, and look after our humane lieutenant; whose heart expanded with his good fortune, and who considered every child of sorrow, or ship-mate in distress, entitled to share in his little property, which in his estimation was a mine of treasure.

## CHAPTER II.

"To what delightful sensations does he awake, whose first reflections are on the good action he performed the day before!"

MR. Thompson had not long been seated on the top of the coach, before he perceived that his next neighbour was either very ill, or in great trouble, by several deep sighs which seemed reluctantly to force their way from an overcharged bosom.

His heart beat responsive to the sound, it was too dark to distinguish faces, nor did he recollect to have observed, on his getting up, whether it was male or female next to him,

him, nor was that a consideration; he chewed his quid some time in silence, till a sudden violent jolt of the coach drew forth a faint shriek from a female voice, and threw her in contact with the lieutenant's shoulder.

"Avast!" cried he, "take care how you steer, or we may roll over, d'ye see;—besides, here seems to be one alongside not able to stem the upsetting.—Take courage, my good lass, lean against me and welcome, we shall soon come into some port, and you shall have a good swill of grog to cheer your heart."

"You are very kind, good Sir," answered a feeble voice; "I am indeed but little able to bear the rapid motion of the carriage, much less those sudden shakes, but I shall be better by and by."

"I hope so, I hope so," rejoined the lieutenant, "we shall get into smooth water presently, when we are off the stones."

No

No answer was returned, and a dead silence ensued until they came to their first stage for changing horses.

Thompson, on the appearance of a light, turned to look at his neighbour, and beheld the pale skeleton of a young woman, who seemed sinking fast into the grave, and scarce able to sit upright.—"Odd's my life, poor soul," said he, "you seem to want ballast; it will never do to steer this course.—Why didn't you heave into the cabin?"

"Because, because," replied she tremulously, "it was not convenient,—I have more air here."

"Yes, yes, but a few such squalls as we had some time ago, may turn you overboard;—you are not steady enough, my good lass, to keep your course here."

He then called for some grog and biscuits, and jumped off to look in at the window of the coach;—"Aye, aye, here's plenty of room, here, you steersman, open the

the coach door, and let us help that poor young woman into this birth."

"Why I have no objection, master," answered the coachman, "but you knows, outside and inside passengers are different things,—who's to pay the difference of the fare?"

"Why *I will*," cried Thompson.

"No, no," exclaimed the invalid, "no, I entreat you, Sir, I am very well here, indeed I am, I will not go inside,—pray leave me as I am."

"Look yee, young woman," returned the lieutenant, "you are upon a slippery fore-castle, you may be over-ship in the dark, and founder before help comes to ye. So no more words, my conscience won't let me see you in danger, nor I sha'n't sit easy with you at my stern; so do, my good soul, let me put you safe under hatches, out of the way of squalls and foul weather."

The

The poor young woman saw it was in vain to contend with her humane neighbour, and however repulsive to her feelings to accept of the obligation, she was as little calculated to support the fatigue of her situation, as unable to pay the additional expence. She therefore, with tears dropping on her cheeks, silently permitted herself to be placed in the coach,—nor did she reject a biscuit, though she declined the grog.

"Mayhap," said he, "a gill of warm wine will do you more good," and without waiting a reply, he dashed off and presently returned with it, entreating her to drink it. Not to disappoint him, she sipped a small quantity and pressing his hand, said,—"God bless you!"

The manner and the words shot through the heart of the poor lieutenant; but a summons from the coachman to resume his place, cut short all further conversation, and he jumped up to his birth, after tossing off

off his glass of grog, which he found very necessary to recruit his spirits.

When they stopped at the inn, to dine, Thompson handed out his sick friend, with equal respect and tenderness; nor did he neglect offering his hand to three other females in the coach, *one* of which only accepted it, the other two threw up their heads and coldly declined his assistance.

Thompson was not a man of observation, he knew nothing of the world, or of the secret springs of the human heart; he had no idea that he could have given offence by shewing humanity to a fellow creature, or committed an unpardonable insult, by "stowing a sick outside passenger into the cabin."

He gave his arm to the young woman, and convoyed her into a good room, where she was scarcely seated, before, to his great dismay, she fainted, and he loudly vociferated for assistance.

By

By the endeavours of the landlady, and the smelling-bottle of the lady who had deigned to accept of Thompson's offered hand, the poor invalid soon recovered, and he left her to their care, "while he examined into the state of the locker."—A fine piece of roast beef and a giblet pie were just going smoaking hot to the table; but though the scent was perfectly agreeable to him, he had consideration enough to think it might be too powerful for a sick stomach, he therefore asked if they had any new laid eggs, with a tart or two, for the poor young woman in the other room.

"Yes, Sir," replied the landlady, "we can give her a couple of eggs and a nice custard, in a trice; — but—a—as these things are not provided for the coach passengers, we shall expect them to be paid extra for."

"Very well," returned he, "carry them in, and *I will* pay for them."

He

He went back and told the invalid she would have an egg brought to her, and as soon as he had swallowed a few mouthfuls of beef, he would come to her again.—Tears were her only answer, and he darted away, followed by the lady.

"I admire your humanity, Sir," said she, "for I find you are an entire stranger to this young woman."

"I don't know who she may be," answered he, stopping and bowing to the speaker, "but what of that, you see she is very sick, poor soul, and it's our duty to help forward a fellow creature.—She's bad enough, and, I fear, will soon be in that port from whence there is no return."

"I fear so too," rejoined the lady, "and 'tis from thence I feel much to admire in your kindness.—Young men in this age rarely bestow favours on females without a view to self-gratification of some kind or other."

Befor

Before he could reply, they were summoned to dinner,—Thompson, much pleased with the lady's kindness to the sick girl, and attention to himself, was particularly assiduous for her accommodation, without intending any slight to the others, or observing their haughty and indignant looks.

And here it is impossible to refrain from observing, how much our own comforts in life depend upon our attention to those of others.—The two ladies whose humanity was not proof against the affront of having an outside passenger, whose dress was as humble as her pretensions, obtruded upon them so unceremoniously by the lieutenant, whose wrapping great coat demonstrated, that "*he* was no great things, and equally low-bred and impertinent," sat in a disdainful silence until they arrived at the inn; when their anger burst forth in scornful observations, and a reprimand to the coachman, for admitting such low creatures into

into their society, who had taken outside places.

"As to low, or high," answered the man, "so they pays me the full fare, its one and the same thing to me.—Besides, the poor young woman was mortal bad, and he was a good hearted fellow that offered to pay the fare, and all passengers are alike to me."

"Then you ought never to have persons of consequence in your coach, fellow, if you don't know how to behave yourself."

"I knows very well how to behave myself. I don't want to affront nobody," returned coachey, "the young woman was a clean decent body, and as good as others, for the matter of that, seeing her fare will be paid."

"Don't be impertinent, fellow, 'tis plain you don't care how you insult ladies so *you can be paid*.—You would not have taken her into the coach without being sure of your

your money, though you presumed to force her upon us."

"That's another sort of a thing. I pity's the poor thing, and would sarve her with all my heart, but the coach is measter's property, and I mustn't chouse him of his fare. —But what signifies words about it, she is an inside passenger now, and he's an honest lad that lent her a hand."

The insulted ladies found it was in vain to contend; they encouraged each other in the idea of affronted consequence, and displeased that their companion had followed the two low creatures, they determined to send *her to Coventry*, and to preserve an indignant silence in the coach.

This wise resolution accompanied them to the dinner table, when to their extreme surprise they beheld the lieutenant's uniform, and a figure, now disencumbered of an old wrapping coat, that he need not blush to exhibit in the most fashionable circles in the kingdom; though it wanted the

polish of high life. He had a fine open, manly countenance, an easy air, and a heart that diffused the irresistible charm of good humour over a very tolerable set of features, setting at defiance both ill-temper and ill-breeding.

Each lady found an inclination to wave her displeasure and profit by his attentions, but the compact they had entered into, and the shame of dropping their haughty reserve all at once, kept both silent, equally dissatisfied with themselves and the lady who was the object of the young officer's civility.

Their meal was silent and uncomfortable, and they resumed their places in the coach undetermined in what manner to descend from their stilts, without condescending to notice the obtruded outside passenger.

The young woman, much refreshed, and gratefully sensible to the kindness she had experienced, expressed her thanks to the humane lady in terms superior to her appearance;—

appearance;—another pang to the hearts of her stately companions, (for there are people in the world who dislike not the incense of gratitude, though they have not hearts to deserve it,) which encreased their displeasure and vexation, till it recoiled so forcibly upon the pride of the elder lady, that she exclaimed,—"Nothing can be more ill-bred, than for people thus shut up with others, to single out any particular person, or subject, to the exclusion of other passengers from enjoying a conversation, to which all have an equal right."

"Your pardon, Madam," said the young woman, modestly, "I have no pretensions to join in conversation; it was simply a few words from my heart, which I addressed to this lady, to whose humanity I am greatly indebted."

A scornful elevation of the head, and a significant glance, in which her associate readily joined, towards the *humane* lady, was the only immediate reply.

*Her*

*Her* penetration easily developed their characters; she had observed their mortification during the dinner hour, when the navy beau, without design, had totally overlooked them, in his eager desire to serve "a kindly good-natured gentlewoman." Influenced therefore by humanity, and a desire to punish those unfeeling women, she appeared not to notice their observation, or the apology from the poor invalid, but in a kind voice questioned her, if she was going to Portsmouth?

"No, Madam," answered she, "I shall be set down ten miles on this side of it, and shall then have nearly two miles to walk to my native village."

"Will it be possible for you to walk? I fear your strength is inadequate to the fatigue."

"I must, however, make the trial, Madam, for there is no stage conveyance."

At that moment a hind wheel flew off from the coach, and laid it flat on its side.

A general shriek ensued; but most providentially no person within, or without, received any material injury. The horses did not attempt to move; and only one man made a complaint,—he had pitched upon his shoulder, and severely bruised it. Others were slightly hurt; but our lieutenant, and the ladies inside, suffered very little, and were more alarmed than really hurt by the accident.

When Thompson recovered his feet, he hastened to the relief of those "confined in the cabin." On looking in at the "port-hole," he saw the sick girl and the compassionate lady raising their heads, while their companions were screaming and struggling to get above them.

"Avast there," cried he, "I shall take these in tow first, because *one* can't help herself, and t'other was willing to help her. So, d'ye see, when I have stowed them safely, mayhap I shall come back to dive for you; but don't encrease the storm by your

your squalls, because they'll do you no service at all."

Whilst he was speaking he was not idle, but with the assistance of another man, soon released his two favourites from their painful situation; and having seated them on a bank in the road, he returned to the coach, where he heard,—"Oh, the unfeeling sea brute!—Help, help, we shall be killed!"

"No, not so bad as that neither," said Thompson, very coolly, "for you have tongue-speech enough; and as you are my fellow creatures, and women too, my help is at your service,—and I hope you are not much hurt."

While he was speaking, a struggle ensued between the gentle associates, who first should lay hold of his hand, and be extricated by the efforts of his humanity; and in this contest, some rude expressions and screams were issued from both ladies.

"Odds bobs! one at a time," cried Thompson, "there's no grappling two at once from this port hole." And then laying firm hold of the one nearest to him, he soon disengaged her; and while his assistant took her from him, he as assiduously relieved the other, and both were conducted to their companions.

This accident happened about a mile from their last resting place. The linch-pin that fastened the wheel was broken, and there was no proceeding without a new one; consequently the coachman was obliged to go back, whilst his horses were taken care of by the outside passengers.

A common calamity generally unites people together, but that effect was far from being produced by the present one; on the contrary, each of the two ladies who had before united in one sentiment, had on this occasion shewn so much selfishness, and, forgetful of their dignified consequence, had so insulted each other by rude

rude epithets, and the exertion of their hands and feet, that they were become irreconcilable enemies. Nor could their mutual dislike to the lieutenant and his favourites, now draw them together, or extort one gentle word, or commiserative glance; though both separately complained of their fright, and apprehended terrible consequences from bruises they were as yet scarcely sensible of.

But those complaints were wasted on the "desert air." The poor invalid, though but little hurt, had a frame so weakened by illness, that the sudden concussion had exceedingly disordered her; yet she strove to conceal her agitations, and the real humane lady, though not a little terrified, was too grateful to Providence, and too much interested for the young woman, to bestow a moment's attention on those, who had so lately shewn such perfect indifference for the sufferings of others.

The lieutenant had done *his duty*, but the epithet of "sea brute," had reached his ear, and was discordant to his feelings; and although he would not deny his assistance to the meanest, or most unworthy of God's creatures, in the moment of danger, yet his heart could distinguish between kindness, gratitude, selfishness, and impertinence, he therefore directed all his attention to his friends, unheeding the querulous complaints of the others.

The young woman mean time satisfied the humane curiosity of the lady who supported her. She said her father was a farmer and a man of property; that in her early days she had experienced the most tender love from both her parents, and being an only child, had been taught to look forward to a comfortable independence. When she was near sixteen, she had the irreparable misfortune to lose her beloved mother. Her father was greatly afflicted, but he redoubled his kindness to her; and

for

for many months it was their mutual endeavour to console each other.

There was living near them the widow of a lawyer, with two daughters nearly her own age, with whom they were upon neighbourly terms. The lawyer was supposed to have left but little behind him, and every one was surprised at the handsome appearance of Mrs. Woodman and her daughters.

After her beloved mother died, this widow paid them very great attention, and the families were much together, but she had not the slightest suspicion of any attachment between her father and the lady; for as she had been a widow only three months previous to the death of her parent, she thought it was common sympathy that attracted each for their mutual consolation.

One morning, just ten months after the fatal event which had destroyed all her comforts, her father abruptly introduced Mrs. Woodman as his wife, and a mother

to whom he expected she would shew the greatest respect.

"It is needless, Madam," continued the poor girl, "to describe my feelings or regrets; I resolved to obey my father, though I soon found it impossible to love his wife, who governed him and the family in the most despotic manner.

"Her daughters insulted me hourly with the superiority of their birth, and by taking the lead of me on all occasions; so that I was, in a short time, a mere upper servant, and commanded by my father to oblige the Miss Woodmans, as I valued his future love and protection.

"However repugnant to my feelings, I determined to obey him. But proud ungenerous spirits soon assume a privilege to insult those compelled to bear, and who for peace sake are resolved to *for*bear,—and in a few months their insolence and tyranny arrived at such a height, that I was worse treated,

treated, and little better dressed, than our menial servants who worked on the farm.

" Finding my health fast declining, and my spirits subdued, I one day summoned courage to tell my father, I had thoughts of going to service; that I could not work more any where than I did at home, and I was sure could not possibly receive worse usage.—I had borne, till patience was exhausted, and if I experienced the same treatment three months longer, was persuaded I should soon after be in my grave.

" He seemed affected, paused a moment, and then hastily left me, saying he would consult his wife.

" I saw him not again till we met at dinner.—After the table was cleared, he said,—" Mary, I have spoken to your mother, who is much shocked at your ill-temper and ingratitude, but kindly wishes I would agree to any plan that you like and think conducive to your happiness.—Since, therefore, 'tis your desire to leave

us, she is so good as to say she will introduce you to a distant relation of her's in London, who has the power to recommend you into some good family, and with whom you may board till you are well settled.

"I shall also, *by her desire*, give you twenty pounds in your pocket, and will allow you that sum yearly, that you may have an independence; and I hope you will now think you have met with more kindness and generosity from your mother and me, than your sullen ill-temper has deserved from us."

"To this observation I made no reply; I only said, I hoped I should never lose his affection, nor by any improper conduct be thought unworthy of being considered as his child.

"I left the room.—I saw exultation sparkling in the eyes of both the mother and her daughters, that they had succeeded in driving me from the house of my parent;—and much had I endured, and great

great had been the struggles of my feelings before I had resolved on a step so painful. But I could bear no more, and once determined, I had resolution to persevere.

"I will not, Madam, trouble you with a description of the agonies I felt when quitting the house, and a parent once so tender, and ever so dear to me; nor the many unpleasant occurrences I met with in London, before I obtained a situation.

"Unhappily the sufferings of my mind and body had been gradually undermining my health before I left my father's house; and as, while I had any strength, I never complained, or relaxed in the performance of my duties, I was not fortunate enough to meet with one sympathising heart to shew me the least indulgence.

"For eighteen months I have attended a lady of fashion, whose eternal round of engagements, late hours, and the important business of dress, which necessarily engaged every vacant moment, left her no

opportunity to observe my looks, or encreasing illness, till faintings used to follow the labours of the toilet; it was then discovered I was unfit for my situation, and I was discharged.

"I took a small lodging and sent for medical advice, though convinced no advice could restore a broken constitution or heal a wounded heart.

"I wrote to my father, without exaggerating, or concealing, the state of my health. It was many days before I had an answer, and when it came, only added bitter pangs to a suffering spirit;—"he had been engaged by the marriage of the eldest Miss Woodman to a medical gentleman in the neighbourhood, to whom he had given five hundred pounds, which sum he also *had intended* to give me, had not my perverse temper carried me from his house, and prevented any offer for me.—However, he desired I would have proper advice, and endeavour to get well.—When I wanted money

money I might let him know, but *that could not be the case yet.*"

"This indifference from a father once so affectionate, and ever tenderly loved, encreased the complaint in my side and on my chest, by the many sleepless nights it cost me.—The doctor attended me some weeks, and the expence of that, and my lodging, soon reduced my finances, while my weakness encreased daily; I then determined to request the doctor's candid opinion, whether it were possible I should get into health?—Thus pressed, he said, —"Nothing was impossible with God! I had youth on my side, and much patience. Still, he confessed, that the present state of my health was very doubtful; he feared medicine could do no more for me, but there was *a chance*, by country air and proper attention."

"I was now satisfied of my danger, and heard his opinion with firmness and resignation to the Almighty will.—Immediately

ately I wrote to my father, that it was my wish to die under my paternal roof, and told him the doctor's final opinion.

"By the return of post I received an answer, desiring I would come down directly; that he had no doubt but kindness and country air would set me up again, and they would be all very glad to see me.

"I knew no time was to be lost if I ever were to see him again; and having paid off my doctor, my lodging, and some small debts, I had only about fifteen shillings left in my pocket. I was therefore obliged to take an *outside place*, though scarcely able to sit up at all,—and to your humanity, Sir," added she, addressing the lieutenant, "I am indebted for much ease and comfort."

Thompson jumped up, wrung her hand, and darted off the other side the bank;—nor could the lady refrain from tears at this sad artless tale, delivered with difficulty, when

when she cast her eyes over the skeleton frame of the narrator.

"Good God!" cried she, "I would not have to undergo the feelings of your unjust father, for all that the world can bestow;—affliction and remorse must make his future days wretched!"

"I hope not," said the meek sufferer. "It will be a consolation to me to die in the house where my dear mother died, and to be buried in the same grave.—I wish also to take a last leave of my poor father, and speak peace to his soul.—Alas! he has not been permitted to follow the impulses of his own heart, and is more to be pitied than condemned."

Thompson at that moment came up, for a returned post chaise had been stopped by its driver, who asked if any of the ladies would get in?—On enquiry, he was to stop at the village where the young woman proposed leaving the coach.

"Upon

"Upon my word," said the lady, "I think you had better go on in the chaise, we may be detained some time, and possibly the driver may be persuaded to take you home."

"Ah, Madam," answered she, "my fare is already paid."

"Never mind that," cried Thompson, then calling the man, he asked him if he would take that sick good young body to her father's house?

The man said it was a punishable thing, and he might lose his place; when looking more earnestly at her,—"Lord!" cried he, "why, if it ben't Miss Mary Thompson!"

"Who, what!" exclaimed the lieutenant, "what is her name?"

"My name is indeed Thompson," answered she, "and I remember you well, Joe."

"Dear heart, how thin you be growed! sick, indeed, God bless you, come what will on't, I'll take you safe home, for I remember

member when you was very kind to mother when she was cruel bad, and I believe you and *your* good mother saved her life.—Come, get in, Miss, I'll take as much care of you, as if you were with your own brother."

Miss Thompson got up, the lieutenant stood speechless till she addressed him, then pulling a bit of paper and a pencil out of his pocket, he wrote his own name upon it, and his agent's. — "There," said he, "whether we be of kin or not I can't tell; but no matter, if you ever want a friend and I am in old England, Harry Thompson is your man."

The poor girl burst into tears, and took an affectionate leave of the lady and her kind benefactor.—Pressing his hand she implored the blessings of Heaven on him, with every good this world could bestow; to which he could make no answer but a fervent kiss on her hand,—and turning to the post-boy, he put five shillings into *his* hand,—

hand,—"There, my lad," said he, "never forget to be kind and helpful to a fellow creature in distress, and you'll never want a good birth above there, in *your* time of need."

The two sullen ladies who were seated at some distance, and had not heard Miss Thompson's little narrative, saw her placed in the chaise, by her good friends, with equal surprise and indignation.—It has been observed by Rochefaucault, "that when two people quarrel, they generally sacrifice a third person to their reconcilement, and are *dear friends* for ever after;" how far the *latter* part of the observation extended to these ladies we know not, but 'tis most certain, their spleen and envy towards the poor young creature overcame the temporary anger occasioned by their selfish struggles in the coach, and broke the sullen silence they had hitherto observed.

"Was ever folly and rudeness carried to such a pitch as this?" exclaimed one; "not content

content with obtruding that creature upon us, that absurd ill-bred young man has placed her in the chaise, forsooth, without once paying us the compliment to ask if we chose to have it."

"*My dear Madam,*" returned her companion, "it is our misfortune to be with such low people; I feel myself extremely fortunate in the pleasure of your company, otherwise I must absolutely have been dumb.—That woman I was really inclined to think a good sort of body enough, but her associating with those low outside passengers, proves, in spite of her appearance, that she is no better than they are; and, as she will now have no one to talk with, pray don't let us notice the creature."

This agreement was mutually entered into by these good ladies, who were once more charming companions, and joined in abusing their fellow travellers with the most hearty good will.

While

While they were waiting the return of the coachman, one of those sudden thunder storms with hail, lightning, &c. which frequently take a partial direction, unexpectedly broke over them with such violence, that it was impossible to avoid being completely deluged.

Thompson, with the greatest rapidity, threw his great coat over the lady, and placed her on the wheel, as a preferable seat to the damp earth;—he then leaped into the coach, which lay on its side, observing, he could weather the lea-shore, by lying on his back, tho' the coach was upset.

The *two friends* ran about screaming for assistance and covering, but they were unnoticed, as every one was shifting for his own comfort; and the lieutenant had conceived such a hearty dislike to both, that, though one of the best-natured creatures upon earth, he laughed at their distress, observing "they would have a good ducking, and while the poor sick young woman was stowed

stowed in a good birth, they would be half-seas over in a land squall."

'Tis impossible to describe their vexation and deplorable appearance, they were completely wet through; while they beheld the woman they contemned, well covered by a great coat that defied the weather, and placed close to the coach, defended in a great measure from the violence of the storm.

The squall, as Thompson called it, tho' uncommonly violent, was short in its duration, and had just abated when the coachman appeared. The poor ladies, enraged and mortified, wanted an object on whom they could give vent to the passion which boiled in their bosoms; they instantly began to abuse him for his carelessness in not examining the linch-pins before he set out, and forgetting their dignified consequence, descended to scold in language by no means appropriate to their appearance.

The

The man losing all respect, and not a little out of humour, retorted in such vulgar terms, that the lieutenant, from regard to *his* lady, thought it necessary to interfere.—" Come, come, my lad, don't open *your* flood-gates, we have had a water-spout already;—lend a hand, and box the compass, that you may steer us into port before more foul weather overtakes us, and the first port we come to, I'll give you a good glass of grog to warm your inside."

The last part of this speech mollified the coachman, as the few words *he had uttered* had calmed the angry passions in the two ladies; who, shocked, mortified, cold, wet, and uncomfortable, resumed their seats in the coach so completely humbled, that both the lieutenant and the lady felt for their situation, and *their* contempt was changed into pity.

Thompson, whose literal honest heart was always at his lips, after viewing them alternately,

alternately, said,—"Dash me! but *I am* sorry to see you in such a pickle. I had but one great coat to be sure, and that ought to be given to her who was ready and willing to serve another,—for why, "one good turn deserves another."—You hadn't the milk of human kindness for the sick young body, and so in foul weather nobody thought of you, or I might have tossed these pillows here to cover you; and faith I wish I had, for I am deadly afraid you'll suffer a shivering bout."

"Pray, Sir," cried one lady, "what right have you to become an inside passenger, to affront us with your forecastle language?"

"Oh, ho! what then you know a little about the deck of a ship, do ye?—But lookye, young gentlewoman, I don't want to affront any one, and had you been good-natured you would have had help as well as others. And as to my being here, I settled that with the steersman; I have paid for two

two places, and so mayhap I shall go above, and below, just as I like, so you see 'tis of no use to be sulky about the business."

They were now completely silenced, and had to regret that by their pride and want of humanity, they had exposed themselves to mortification and neglect; when a small share of good humour, and a desire for mutual accommodation, would have made their journey pleasant to all parties, and ensured to themselves respect and attention. And this conviction we wish to impress on the minds of our young readers, whether in a stage coach, or in their journey through life, that humanity, affability, and the irresistible charm of good-nature, never fails to inspire admiration, esteem, and respect, and will always make them happy in themselves and agreeable to others.

No particular accident, or incident, occurred during the remainder of their journey; and right glad were the poor shivering

vering ladies to accept the lieutenant's congratulations on being arrived safe in port.

They had indeed dried their clothes, that is their outside garments, at the first stage they came to; but their proud stomachs were not sufficiently subdued to accept a glass of warm grog which Thompson offered them, though not so disdainfully refused as before, for their spirits were a *little humbled.*

But their mutual self-consequence waited to be relaxed by the example of each other, and the first who was addressed *timidly* refusing, the second lady *reluctantly* declined also, each vexed at the pertinacity of her friend; and ashamed to order either spirits or wine, after their refusal, lest they should again draw on themselves the cutting observations of the offended sailor. Thus they continued half dead in their comfortless situation, by their own absurd and fastidious conduct, until they were set down at the end of their journey.

The

The humane lady found friends waiting for her.—She took a card from her pocket, and giving it to the lieutenant,—"My good Sir," said she, "I hope our acquaintance will not end here; little occurrences in this our short journey, has given me such a knowledge of your heart, that I am desirous to consider you in the light of an old friend. Let me hope that if you remain in Portsmouth, you will speedily pay me a visit; you will always find a plate at my table, and a bed in my house at your service.—My residence is only three miles from here; and be assured you will be a welcome guest to me and my family."

Thompson was astonished, and extremely delighted by this unexpected kindness.—"Whenever I am commander of my own time," answered he, "you may depend, good Madam, that I will steer my course to your house; mean time, Heaven bless you, and may you always have fair wind and weather wheresoever you are bound."

She

She thanked him, and again hoped he would soon pay her a visit. She then entered a carriage which was waiting for her, without deigning to notice the two *great* ladies; who to their infinite surprise and vexation, were informed she was a Mrs. Percy, a lady of family and very considerable fortune, who had been to London to serve an old acquaintance in much distress, and on such an occasion delicately laid aside the appearance of superior fortune and consequence, and travelled up and down in the stage without any attendants.

A character of this description was above the comprehension of these proudly mean spirits, they thought "she was a strange character," while they regretted they had lost an opportunity of being known to her; —"but, dear! who could believe a woman of her fortune would travel in a stage coach, and concern herself about a poor outside passenger?"

Poor creatures! they were strangers to the sweet feelings of humanity, the pure delight of sympathizing with the unfortunate; the exalted pleasure which clings to the heart, when we can either relieve or console a suffering fellow creature!—Let us turn from such unworthy beings, on whom the world will revenge itself; for those who cannot feel for the sick and afflicted, will assuredly experience, in the decline of life, that neglect, contempt, and inhumanity, which they have shewn to others.

The landlady of the inn, who had the highest respect for the character of Mrs. Percy, and had been informed by the servants who waited for her arrival, of the occasion that induced her to travel in a stage coach, being present when she gave her card and friendly invitation to our hero, was induced by that circumstance to shew him very particular attention; and as it was too late for him to make his appearance on board

board the "Vengeance" that night, he had a mutton chop and a pint of grog, then retired to his bed with a soul of conscious integrity, at peace with himself and all the world.

Before he dropt asleep, the occurrences of the last eight and forty hours pressed upon his mind; nor could he help reflecting on the strangeness of the circumstance, that poor little Fanny, and the sick young body in the coach, should both bear his own name of Thompson.

"Well," said he, "it was a God send sure enough; who would have thought of my finding name-sakes in such a manner, or that the poor little girl was called by its right name when I gave it mine." He then heaved a sigh for the sad fate of its unhappy mother; and in the same moment it recurred to him, he had till then forgotten the roll of papers the poor woman had given him, which he had put into an inside pocket.

The candle was put out, and his curiosity must be deferred till the next day.

Satisfied in a review of his own conduct, he then commended himself to his Almighty Father's protection, a duty impressed upon his heart from the earliest period of infancy, and never obliterated by time, circumstances, or the many hardships he had gone through with quiet perseverance in his subordinate situations; and soon after he fell asleep, with a mind at ease, and a conscience "such as goodness bosoms ever."

CHAPTER

## CHAPTER III.

"In the world we may find people enough that are ready to lay out their hearts, but 'tis indeed almost a miracle to meet with a man who deserves to receive it."

THOMPSON waked at an early hour, and began to dress and prepare himself for an appearance on the quarter deck of the Vengeance. His secret exultation at the rank he was now to hold, was a little allayed by his total want of information relative to the disposition of his commander and messmates in the ward room.

He had received no polish from education, or society, he only knew the duties

of a seaman, and the respect due to his superiors. He had a native honesty, a strict integrity, and an intuitive civility and kindness, which were frankly offered to all who would receive them; and though oftentimes unworthily treated, his heart retained no gall or resentment,—at peace with himself, he neither feared, flattered, or hated any man.

Of the prudential maxims of the world he knew nothing.—His father had died when he was about thirteen years old, his two brothers, like himself, were obliged to provide for their own subsistence; and he knew not a relative, or friend, who could assist him with a single guinea.

When in the lowest subordinate situation, he lived as other seamen did, except in *two* instances, which his reverence for the advice of a beloved father had so firmly guarded him against, that neither ridicule or example were of sufficient force to overcome the strong impression his parent's

rent's last admonitions had imprinted upon his heart,—" to avoid drunkenness, and forbear insulting his Heavenly Father by profane swearing."

Thompson found it no small matter of difficulty to resist the laugh of ridicule, and guard against the infection of example; but he had from nature a strong mind, and the warmest love and respect for his father, which stimulated him to the observance of his commands and pious exhortations,—tho' he found among his companions, that a simple asseveration, without some accompanying expletives, made but very little way in their belief of his word.

*Odds bobs!—Odds my life!—Dash my buttons!*—and a few such nothing-meaning exclamations, he readily enough adopted; but his most solemn appeal, to confirm any doubted assertion, was, " upon the faith and truth of an honest lad, it is as I tell ye."

His peculiarities after a time ceased to be noticed, otherwise than now and then by, "that puritanical dog, Thompson," or, "that meally-mouthed fellow," and expressions of the same nature, which passed unheeded by him, and were at length almost obsolete.

Good natured and sincere, he was generally beloved. He had a heart adapted for friendship, but in the busy wooden world, there was little opportunity, or inclination, to study characters or make a selection; and when he was rated a midshipman, he had the mortification to find most of those young bucks despised his want of spirit, his strict economy and integrity.—Whilst many without scruple made free with each other's clothes, and broken boxes and lost shirts and stockings were a general complaint, he happily had found favour in the eyes of the gunner, was admitted to mess with him, and his small stock of wearables were in safe custody.

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The gunner was a well informed man, more than fifty. In the course of a three years station in the West Indies, he had marked the character of Thompson, and on many occasions shewn him kindness and indulgence. They were afterwards separated for near two years, when in the course of service, they were again thrown into the same ship, where Thompson was rated.

The good man then took him into his more peculiar care, lent him a few books, improved his writing, and encouraged all the good traits in his character;—it was at this time also, he became acquainted with Mr. Barton, the surgeon's mate, and for two years, with these friends, Thompson passed some of his happiest days.—But the gunner got a superannuation from bad health, Barton luckily got a *gentle* helpmate, and a snug shop; Thompson lost his best companions, and the four following years of his life were unmarked by any par-

ticular occurrence or attachment, till a gallant action recommended him to the particular notice of his commander, and a just representation of his conduct to the Admiralty board, procured him a lieutenant's commission, from which period we date the epoch of his entrance into the world.

We have digressed a little from the chain of our story, where we left Thompson with conscious pride equipping himself to appear before his captain.—On putting on his coat he found the memorable roll of paper, it was sealed and directed,—

"To some soul of humanity, if such "there be in the form of man, I commit "the wrongs, the sorrows, and the crimes "of Ellen.—But whoever he may be into "whose hands these papers shall be given, "if he has not pity and humanity in his "bosom, let him not dare to examine this "sacred trust of unexampled wretchedness;

"this

"this legend of baseness, perfidy, and "guilt."

Thompson, on reading this solemn adjuration felt a shuddering sensation at his heart,—"*Dare I* open it?" thought he.—A moment's reflection recalled the unhappy woman's blessing, and the free delivery of the packet to him.

"Now I cannot peruse it," said he, "I have not time.—Poor soul! 'tis a piteous story, I have no doubt;—but before this hour I trust she has obtained pardon from that merciful judge who sets up aloft—tho' the laws on earth have consigned her to a dismal fate, there is a gracious commander on high who will have mercy on a poor repentant sinner, and give her a good birth at the last."

In a melancholy train of thought he locked the packet in his trunk, with a deep sigh, yet with a gleam of sunshine on his breast, that by taking little Fanny, he had given

given one moment's ease to a despairing heart.

Sweet was the reflection! and his feelings at that moment were to be envied by the happiest voluptuary, however great or distinguished, who is a stranger to the inexpressible delight of having performed a benevolent action. It was this sentiment that banished care from the breast of our hero, and embellished his features with a placidity that bespoke inward content.

Completely dressed, he went on board the Vengeance, then laying off the harbour, and was received by the first lieutenant, who informed him the captain was gone to London, on business to the board, and would not return till the next evening;—adding, "we shall certainly sail in three days after he returns, for our convoy are all ready. If, therefore," continued he, "you have any friends to see, or business to do on shore, now is your time, before the captain comes."

Thompson

Thompson thanked him for the intimation, and was pleased with his appearance and manner, and it just then occurred to him, that he would pay his respects to Mrs. Percy; he, therefore, accepted the liberty, and directly put off for shore, promising to be on board the following morning.

On returning to the inn, he obtained directions for his route, of the landlady, who even offered him a horse; but as it was not then more than eleven o'clock, he had full time enough to walk there.

In less than an hour, he entered on a long avenue of trees, at the end of which he saw a very handsome house, situate on a rising ground, with a lawn, and a fine sheet of water before it.

The lieutenant halted, he had not been in the habit of visiting people of fortune, or at superb houses.—"Odds life!" cried he, "this is a sort of cruise I don't much fancy.—To be sure she kindly invited me, but what then? this great house must have

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a great many fine folks in it, and mayhap all of them may not be so kind hearted as she seemed to be; I've a good mind to shift sail and go back to the landlady."

While he stood thus irresolute, a young gentleman, who appeared about fifteen or sixteen, came from between the trees just before him, and observing Thompson standing motionless, and also seeing the naval uniform, it directly struck him, this stranger was the gentleman whose humanity had been the subject of his mother's panegyric that morning. — Advancing, therefore,—"will you permit me to ask you, Sir, if you are going to visit Mrs. Percy?" said he.

"Why, to own the truth, young gentleman," returned Thompson, "that was my intention; but I don't know how, perhaps I may be taking a liberty here, there may be company."

"No, no, Sir, there are no company,—I am sure my mother will be glad to see you,

you, if you are the gentleman that came in the coach with her from London."

"Yes, the very same," replied our lieutenant, "and if you are sure, young Sir, that I shall not be unwelcome, why I'll go forward."

"I am, indeed, very sure of it," rejoined Master Percy, "and will conduct you, Sir."

Mrs. Percy was sitting in her dressing room, which fronted the avenue, and saw her son and the lieutenant advancing;—she was no less pleased than surprised at this early visit, and hastened down stairs to receive him.—And here we shall give a short account of Mrs. Percy, whose goodness of heart and benevolent actions were a libel upon all her neighbours, with three times her fortune and power of doing good.

She was the daughter and also the widow of two respectable country gentlemen. Brought up in retirement under the care of an affectionate mother, and a very intelligent

gent governess, she had only been twice in London before she was married.

At sixteen she was introduced to society in the neighbourhood, and it was not long before Mr. Foley received many advantageous offers for his daughter, who was known to be heiress to near a thousand a year, besides her personal and mental endowments, which were universally admired.

She was near eighteen, however, before her careful parents permitted any addresses to be openly avowed under their sanction; and among many candidates it most fortunately happened that the man her heart selected, was him of all others to whom Mr. Foley wished to have her united.

His paternal fortune did not *exceed her's*, but the character and principles of Mr. Percy were so well established, that had it been *less*, her judicious parents would have deemed his good qualities a full equivalent for an inferior fortune to their daughter's.

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He had lost both his parents, and was then four-and-twenty, having one young sister, of four years of age, whose birth was followed by the death of her mother, whose health had rapidly declined from the period of her husband's death, six months preceding her own.

This unfortunate little girl, who had three thousand pounds secured to her (her mother's fortune), was left to the care of her maternal aunt, who lived at Richmond, and was, therefore, wholly independent of Mr. Percy, and was the only child that lived out of nine born after their eldest son.

Mr. Percy had of course no one to consult, and having obtained the approbation of Mr. and Mrs. Foley, and the blushing consent of their charming daughter, they were happily married, and for several years enjoyed as much real felicity as this sublunary world could admit of. Three lovely children, two boys and a girl, crowned their happiness,

happiness, and grew up every thing they could wish.

About three years before the period of this introduction, Mr. Percy unhappily caught a cold, by overheating himself in hunting, and fell into a rapid decline; which in five months terminated his existence, to the inexpressible grief of his lady and children.

But Mrs. Percy had a mind too strong, and was too sensible of the crime of sinking under irremediable misfortunes, when she had maternal duties to perform, not to struggle against the sorrows of her heart.—She found the efficacy of a pious resignation, and the exertion of active duties; and though ever feeling her own irreparable loss, she knew *that loss* was an eternal gain to the dear object of her regret, and she bowed in humble submission to the Divine will.

Her children engrossed all her cares, and all her thoughts, and well did their progress in

in goodness, and every requisite accomplishment, repay her maternal anxiety.

Clara who was the eldest was at this time just turned of seventeen; she was not tall enough to be called a fine young woman, but she was a beautiful sylph-like figure, and extremely well proportioned. Many girls are admired as beauties, Clara was more than a beauty,—she was captivating, interesting, intelligent, and irresistible.

She was not a street beauty, to attract the loungers to follow and stare at her;—every one would say, "That's a lovely girl!" but modest, unobtrusive, and retiring, she would soon be forgotten in the dashing, bold, presumptuous forwardness of *fine girls*, who *demand* notice, and *court* observation.

It was at home, among a small circle of friends, that the young Clara was admired and beloved; from thence no one withdrew without a prepossession in her favour.—She was not, however, "a *faultless* monster, which

which the world ne'er saw," she was rather too susceptible; her disposition lively, quick, and with a tenacity in her opinions when called upon to declare them, that was certainly reprehensible in so young a girl, and was a defect her mother laboured hard to correct.

She was humane, generous, and candid. She had read much, and profited by her studies, since her understanding was superior to the common run of young people; and unfortunately she was but too sensible of that superiority, and from thence acquired that pertinacity which would not yield to the weak judgment of others.

It was in vain her mother inculcated the grace of yielding to a weak opponent, and the impropriety of persistance in one of her age.

"My dear Mamma," cried she, "I can be silent, but, indeed, when my sentiments are called for, I cannot be induced to recal them.

them without being *convinced* they are wrong."

"There, my love, is the error.—You are not *easily convinced*, Clara; and, believe me, though the natural sweetness of your temper engages regard, and though I allow that you have some respect for the opinions of older people, yet if you set yourself up as wiser and better informed than your companions, you in fact lessen your own claims, by seeming to *exact* them—and insult your friends, who perhaps have not had your opportunities for improvement.—And in one word, my dear, a truly intelligent, sensible girl, should be diffident, modest, and as unobtrusive in her opinions, as she is in her person."

"But, Mamma, I never presume to *offer* an opinion. You have told me to think before I declare my sentiments, and to acquire a decision, a firmness of character, which may preserve me from an instability, a frivolity of mind and action, which you say,

say, impedes every progress in virtue, are the marks of a mean soul, and renders one variable and contemptible."

"All this is very true, Clara, but you must draw the line between an *obstinacy* in opinion unbecoming one so young, and the frivolous indecision which has no character of its own. You may yield with a grace to the tenacity of others, without adopting their sentiments, if they really appear to be wrong; and this complaisance will do you more honour in the judgment of all sensible people than a persistance in argument.—You give up contention without a forfeiture of your judgment, because it is a vain attempt to convince folly of its absurdity; and be assured, that in general those who have the least pretension to good sense, are the most forward and most tenacious.—Deliver your opinion when called upon with a modest diffidence, it will add grace to a propriety of thinking; but rather decline than seek for any controversy, your youth is a sufficient

sufficient plea, and you will lose nothing in the favour of sensible people by adducing *that*, as an apology for an avoidance of argument."

Clara so tenderly loved her mother, that to deserve a reproof from her, was the severest pain to her heart; she determined, therefore, to be more guarded in future. She was not blind to the quickness of her temper, and *had sometimes* regretted having said *too much*, and blushed for the superiority she had assumed over her companions. Yet still she was fully sensible of her advantages, and found it both difficult and mortifying not to assert them over weak and absurd opinions.—In short, Clara had the best heart in the world; the defect in her character, was a consciousness of a superior understanding and a better education than most of her acquaintance, and on these advantages she erected a little altar of vanity, that diminished the value of her good

good qualities, and created envy in the bosoms of others.

Mr. George Percy, one year younger than his sister, was a very amiable and sensible youth, nor was young William at all inferior to him.—They had not the brilliant understanding of their sister, but a more sedate and improveable one;—they had an excellent tutor, and gave promise of doing him the highest credit by their learning and good sense.

They were both passionately fond of their sister, and she as tenderly loved them, their hearts were in unison, though their spirits did not exactly accord; and a more perfect family union could not be, than existed in the dwelling of Mrs. Percy.

Such were the characters to which our lieutenant was introduced. He was received with a cordiality that delighted him, and in a very few minutes the awe and awkwardness which had accompanied him, entirely

wore

wore off, and he presently felt himself at home.

He told Mrs. Percy he had seized the only opportunity he should have to accept her kind invitation, though he was a little dashed, thinking it too soon.

"It can never be too soon," returned she, "to see a person we esteem; and as I pride myself a little upon reading the minds of people, I do assure you, that in you I am inclined to think I meet an old friend, one whose heart is congenial to my own. My children are also prepared to love you, Mr. Sanby, the tutor, is ready to offer you his esteem; judge therefore whether you could possibly give us the pleasure of your company *too soon*."

Poor Thompson, a stranger to the grace of elocution, could only express his thanks in plain, unadulterated language, which, however, lost nothing of its effect with minds capable of appreciating the effusions of a honest heart.

Mrs. Percy told him, that anxious to hear of Miss Thompson, she had sent a servant on horseback to make enquiry of her health,—"It was singular enough," added she, "that you should find a namesake in that poor young woman your humanity so essentially relieved."

"Yes," returned the lieutenant, "sure enough it dumbfounded me a little; but what of that, the name signifies nothing, since we are all a kin, and came from one parent stock, as my good father used to say."

"Is your father living?" asked Mrs. Percy.

"No, and the worse is my luck; he died when I was but fourteen years old, and so I lost my best friend and adviser, for he was a good soul as ever broke bread. He was a parson, and all the parish loved him dearly; and a better father never lived. My eldest brother is a parson, somewhere in Yorkshire, and t'other lad went to the East Indies. Whether he is dead or alive

I can't say, because I have not heard of him these five years; and as for the parson, he never troubled himself about me after father died.—I was then left to stand on my own bottom, and steer my course as well as I could. Thank God I have done pretty well—I owe nothing but good will to any man—I have not done any thing to be ashamed of—and have now got a little matter of prize money, which is well disposed of;—their lordships have given me a commission, which I hope I shall never disgrace—and with health, and a good conscience, I am as happy as his Majesty, God bless him!—and have nothing to wish for, except it be a better way of talking, for as I must now go more among your genteel folks, I must try to learn more civil manners. My good father taught me to be upright, honest, and trust in God, but, poor soul, he knew nothing of the manners of the world; however, one is never too old to learn."

"My dear Sir," returned Mrs. Percy, delighted with his honest frankness, "you have an invaluable heart, and a knowledge from nature superior to all the polished manners of the world—you have humanity, and a soul feelingly alive to the distresses of your fellow creatures; your intercourse with mankind may possibly give more *elegance* to your conversation, but believe me, if polite language should teach you to disguise the native sincerity of your heart, you will lose more than you can gain by *your* knowledge of the world."

Thompson bowed his thanks, and the conversation soon became more general; for Mr. Sanby had resided some years in a sea port town, and therefore easily assimilated himself to the phrases and manners of the lieutenant.

Clara was extremely delighted; here was a new character for her observation. She was struck with his person, which was manly and attractive, though he had not sacrificed

sacrificed to the graces; and the ingenuous language of the heart, free from the sophistication of flattery and fashion, with the traits of goodness in his disposition which her mother had related, altogether gave him a sort of interest in her esteem, as a being superior to the frivolous manners of the age.

The family in general regretted that their acquaintance would have so speedy a termination; a voyage to the East Indies included a period of time in which a thousand unforeseen occurrences might intervene to impede their hope for an opportunity to improve their intimacy.

"Such is the common lot of mortals," said Mr. Sanby, "we have always something to wish for, and something to regret; to enjoy the present good therefore, we must be resigned to the future.—Whether it be good, or whether it be evil, if our hearts do not accuse us, content and peace

been a sailor, he had never till then met with hearts in unison with his own.

It had not been his lot to be introduced into the society of any females above the rank of landlady's; obliged to live on his little modicum of pay, and to confine himself wholly to his ship, he had been excluded from all expansion of ideas, all possibility of improvement, beyond the advice and friendly admonitions of the gunner, who though a worthy man, was as much a stranger as himself to the polish of genteel society. And if from books he had learnt there was a different order of beings, and a few fine gentlemen, and some gay ladies had swam before his eyes when he went sometimes on shore, yet so far from holding converse with such, he was ready to cry out with the courtier in the court of Lewis the fourteenth,—"Worship them, Thompson, but touch them not."

It is extremely probable that had he known the fortune and establishment of Mrs.

Mrs. Percy, no consideration would have induced him to have made the visit; but that lady and her family possessed the captivating powers of making every one in their company easy, and pleased with themselves,—and our hero felt these powers so irresistibly, that it was after several fruitless efforts, he at length rose, and was compelled to tear himself from the ladies. Mr. Sanby and the young gentlemen accompanied him part of the way.

"Well, Clara," said Mrs. Percy, "what do you think of my travelling friend?—Did I speak too highly of him?"

"By no means, my dear mother, I am enchanted with him; he is handsome, a good figure, with an openness of countenance expressive of the character of his mind. 'Tis true, he has not been in the Chesterfield school, he has not sacrificed to the graces, and one might wish him to be a *little more* polished; but even as he is, with that honest frankness, I should be

more proud of his attachment, than of any luke-warm heart, such as inhabit the bosoms of our neighbouring beaus."

"Indeed!" returned Mrs. Percy. "I am pleased, however, Clara, that you can so justly appreciate the worth of a worthy young man, for such I really think is Mr. Thompson; but as to *hearts* and *attachments*, my dear, it is yet too early for you to be proud of any thing, beyond your own endeavours to attain those estimable qualities, which may entitle you to hope for the approbation of worthy people."

Clara made no reply, for her sentiments did not *exactly* accord with her dear mamma's. She thought herself very capable of judging the value of hearts, and was not insensible to the admiration she excited; though she was too modest to court it, and had too much good sense to be proud of lip-deep compliments, which now and then reached her ears in their visits to Portsmouth and their surrounding friends.

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The artless Thompson was the first man she had ever particularly regarded; the traits of his humanity related by Mrs. Percy, had greatly prejudiced her in his favour, for *her heart* was "open as day to melting charity," and glowed with benevolence and compassion for every unfortunate fellow creature. Sentiments, therefore, so congenial to her own, had spoken volumes in behalf of our lieutenant, before his manly person and undisguised frankness gave him claims to her notice; she saw him depart with regret, and long after he was tossing on the wide ocean, Clara retained the impression in her bosom of Thompson's person and goodness of heart.

Our hero returned to the inn, and, *for the first time in his life*, had his rest broken by the sweet remembrance of the lovely kind-hearted lass, who played, and sung like a nightingale.—"He should like to know a little more of such good souls, for he had met with none such before in his travels

travels through life;"—howsomever, it signified nothing to wish, because it was not very likely they should meet again, as next day he must go aboard, enter on new duties, and soon be far away from Old England.

He gave a sigh to the memory of little Fanny, and her lost mother; trusted the former to Heaven and honest Sam Barton, with a resolution to rise early, make a bit of a will to give his little girl the prize money in his agent's hands, and never to desert her whilst he had life.

He then reverted to poor Miss Mary Thompson, whose death he looked upon as inevitable.—His heart upbraided her unkind and careless father, but he comforted himself that she would shortly be in a safe harbour, and want for nothing.

"But dash my buttons," said he, "if this isn't somehow the oddest thing in the world, that she and little Fanny should be my namesakes, and both fall aboard my quarters,

quarters, without any of us being a-kin, except by the way of Adam, the great gardener, in Paradise!—Well, but what does it signify, if we all came from one stock, why then we must be shoots from the same tree, and 'tis our duty to help one another."

With this incontrovertible truth, dictated by nature, and the milk of human kindness flowing in his heart, Thompson fell asleep, and sweet were the slumbers of justice and humanity.

The following day Thompson made his appearance before his commander, was politely received by a captain something younger than himself, who had barely served his allotted time to qualify him for passing as a lieutenant, and sailed one voyage in that rank, when a rapid promotion had made him the commander of a frigate.

Unhappily, we cannot have every thing exactly as we wish in this life, the Vengeance frigate was ordered to the East-Indies, with a convoy.—Captain Delmore had

had no inclination to the voyage, he posted to London, in the hope, and with a persuasion, that as a lord's son, *his interest* and *consequence* would induce the board to change the destination of the ship, or give him another.—But he was a *little* mistaken; his request was denied in a way not perfectly agreeable to his feelings, as there was a mixture of warmth and indignation shewn on the application being made.—He returned to his ship not in the happiest disposition in the world, and though he had slept upon his disappointment, his mind was far from being at ease when his newly appointed lieutenant made his first bow to him.

Politeness was habitual to the Honorable Captain Delmore, who had been early initiated into the most elegant society, and therefore, however discomposed in his spirits, his manners were fashioned by external civility and calmness.

Thompson,

Thompson, whose penetration never extended beyond the surface of things, was extremely well satisfied with his reception, took possession of his new birth, not a little gratified by his station in the ward-room; and having made his bit of a will, and enclosed it in a few lines of hearty good will to his quondam messmate, Sam, with love to his wife and little Fanny, he gave himself up to the duties of his station, and in two days after they sailed for their destined port. Wishing him all the success his honest heart deserves, we shall leave him to proceed on his long voyage, and take a look in upon the Bartons and their little charge.

## CHAPTER

## CHAPTER IV.

"Persons with vulgar souls and shallow understandings are scarcely ever to be set right; too weak for reason, too tenacious for intreaty, and too indifferent for remonstrance, they indulge a silly absurd pride, and persist in obstinacy, as a proof of superiority and fancied wisdom."

IN a few days after the lieutenant took his departure, Mrs. Barton found poor Fanny "a very tiresome brat, always in the way, and wanting to be looked after."—In vain did Barton remonstrate against her unkindness to the child, his gentle help-mate soon silenced him in her usual way.

"Why

"Why sure, Sam Barton, you be the ungratefullest fellow alive, to dare for to go for to say a word to me, and tell about ill-nature and such like.—Cross, indeed! yes, I was very cross to be sure when I took you from ship-board, gave you myself and my shop, when you hadn't more than a change to your back, and made a gentleman of you! Fine thing, indeed, if I can't speak as I like in my own house, after my kindness in taking this vagabond child, who has no parents to take care of her, and all for little or nothing;—for what's a paltry guinea and half a month for her keep?—Why many folks give twice as much to take charge of a horse.—But you are never satisfied, Sam Barton, you be the discontentedest fellow in the whole world."

"Come, come, Mary, say no more, don't let's quarrel about nothing, I know you will be kind to the poor dear little thing."

"Quarrel!—was ever the like of that there!—Do I ever quarrel, you idle ingratitude

titude fellow?—Don't I work like a horse, in shop early and late, when you only stops now and then to prate away?—And then for to go for to bring that hungry mess-mate to eat one out of house and home, and leave his brat here!—I should be glad to know, Sam Barton, what wou'd becomed of her, if my foolish good-nature hadn't taken her in, and then to talk of ill-nature and quarrelling.—O! you are a vile, shocking, barbarous ———"

"Stop, stop, my dear Mary, I wont say a word more, do as you please, don't be angry with me, and I'll do every thing to please you."

"Aye, you had better, I believe, it was well I kept the staff in my own hand;—tho' you live upon the fat of the land, and brought next to nothing towards it, *mind that*, Sam Barton."

It was quite impossible for poor Sam to forget what he was constantly reminded of two or three times a day, if his deary was out

out of humour.—Indeed he had not found all the comforts he expected in his "Tobacco Warehouse," and had several times debated the point in his own mind, whether lopping of limbs, attending the sick, and enduring the war of elements, were not preferable to the eternal upbraidings and never ceasing alarm of his wife's tongue, which embittered every morsel he eat.

And this very doubtful point had occupied his mind the very morning he met his old ship-mate, Thompson; and when in the fullness of his joy, he hoped the lieutenant intended to dine with him, he forgot at the moment, whether he dared to offer him a welcome.

The subsequent addition of little Fanny was also an additional rub; but he had advanced too far to retreat, and had only to hope that his friend's dress might procure him a decent reception, as Mrs. Barton's civilities were exactly proportioned to the appearance of those who attended upon her.

His

His hope was tolerably well realized, she kept within bounds, though there was rather more colour in her face than mere cooking would have raised.—What followed, respecting the child, he neither expected nor wished for, but he could not for his own quiet, raise any objections to disappoint the sanguine hope of the generous Thompson, or the avaricious views of his wife.

Her present treatment of the poor deserted little being was such as he foresaw, and all that lay in his power to counteract it was, to be kind to it himself, and engage little Sall to do the same.

The child was one of the best tempered little creatures that could possibly be; after a day or two she was perfectly reconciled, called Mrs. Barton Mamma, and would, if she had been encouraged, have shewn great fondness for her.—To Barton and Sall she was the most playful good-humoured child

in

in the world, but she soon learned to fear and to dislike her ill-tempered protectress.

It happened very fortunately, that the day on which the letter from Thompson, with his little bit of a will came to hand, Mrs. Barton was gone to market, and her husband resolved she should not have possession of it.—Her guinea and half a month was to be deducted from his pay; the seventy pounds prize money, Thompson wrote to his agent to take care of for a little girl called Fanny Thompson, who the agent naturally concluded was the lieutenant's child.

Barton took the first opportunity that offered to get the will copied, which copy was put into the agent's hands, and the original he gave, sealed up and directed, to the care of the parson of the parish, who was a very worthy man. This business transacted unknown to the lady, would have been the bane of his peace had it reached

reached her ears, but he had enjoined secresy and the gentlemen were faithful.

The child had been some months in the house, Barton grew every day more attached to her, and the grateful little thing ran after him like a puppy, when one morning, as he was standing at the door with Fanny in his arms, a woman came into the shop to be served, and he, observing his wife busy with another, set the child down to attend his customer, who was a chance one, and came in for an ounce of rappee.

She looked very earnestly on Fanny, and then on Mr. Barton, who was not observing her, at last she said,—"Sure I can't be mistaken, I took such notice of the poor thing that I can't be mistaken, and I am sure, Mr. Barton, you were one of the good souls which took the little creature from the wicked woman who was condemned to die for murder.—Yes, I remember all the whole of it, in the yard in Newgate.—Well, it was a blessed charitable

ritable thing of you and the other gentleman, as the poor child could not help her mother's being a thief and a murderer, you know."

'Tis utterly impossible to describe the consternation of Barton, who was struck absolutely speechless. Not so his gentle wife, she darted from behind the counter, —"What's that you say, good woman, did you know the mother of that little girl?"

"Me know such a vile hussey!—Why I never saw her in my life but when I went to hear the sermon that was preached to the wicked wretches that were to be hanged, and in the chapel saw Mr. Barton there, and another gentleman, and then we came into the yard, and then the vile hussey who was a thief and a murderer, made such a screaming about her child, that at length she fall'd into fits, and then the two gentlemen runned away with the child, and every body said it was very charitable of them.

was obliged also to witness the ungovernable rage and shameful language of Mrs. Barton, who was detailing her cruel wrongs to the listening crowd, while Barton, overcome by shame, resentment, and a detestation of his wife's unpardonable violence, had retired to the back of the shop, trying to soothe and still little Fanny, whose terror he feared would throw her into fits.

The lady looked at them.—"What a lovely child!" said she.—"Pray may I enquire the cause of the child's fright and all this violence?"

"The story is too long to tell you, Madam," replied Barton, "this is a poor unhappy little orphan, whom a humane friend of mine, quite a stranger to her or her family, preserved from want and misery, and pays that woman, who I am ashamed to say is my wife, for keeping her.—Somebody has told her, the mother of the child was a very bad woman, and *that* has unjustly turned her heart against the little innocent;

I

I know not what I shall do with the dear lamb, she I fear will use it cruelly."

The lady drew a card from her pocket,—"Take this, if your wife will not be reconciled to it, or behaves ill, bring the child to me."

"Heaven bless you," cried Barton, "the child is not destitute, she has enough to pay for her maintenance."

The mob beginning to disperse, Mrs. Barton opened the "flood-gates of her eloquence" once more against her husband; the stranger threw a glance of ineffable disdain upon her, and nodding kindly to Barton,—"You'll remember," said she, and immediately left the shop.

The scene that ensued baffles all attempt at description,—Barton was worked up to a firm resolution at once to free himself from a yoke he could no longer support; his "snug birth," the object of envy to many of his former messmates, had been to him a scene of eternal disquiet, though he had sa-

crificed almost every manly feeling to preserve peace—as *she pulled*, he had *let go*, until he had no longer a will of his own, or enjoyed one comfortable hour.

Her cruelty to little Fanny was beyond endurance; it so indisputably proved the baseness of her soul, that no consideration on earth could induce him to remain domesticated with a woman so devoid of feeling and humanity.

He resigned himself to the violence of her passion, without attempting to allay it; and this quietude enraged her still more.—"How dared he to be so silent—wasn't she worth an answer?—she would have the whole story—she would know how she was cheated and abused—the mother of the base brat she dared to say was one of his hussies, whom he supported by robbing her."

Barton made no reply. With the child in his arms he took refuge in his bed room; thither she pursued him, and at length burst

burst open the door. Little Sall had followed and was begging her to come down, when the door suddenly gave way to her violent efforts, and she tumbled headlong into the room.

A neighbour, who had by accident come into the shop as Mrs. Barton flew up after her husband, led by curiosity, was listening on the stairs, when she heard the violent noise and a loud scream. She directly ran up, where she beheld Barton with the child in his one arm, while with the other he attempted to lift up his wife, whose nose and mouth were running with blood. On seeing the woman, she exclaimed,— "The villain has killed me! — I am murdered!"

"No, mistress," cried Sall, "poor master never touched you with his little finger, it was you broked open the door and fell in."

The poor murdered woman instantly recovered her legs, and all bleeding as she was, fell upon little Sall, tore her cap from

her head, and boxed her ears heartily, before the other could prevent her.

The neighbour, with much difficulty, drew her from the terrified girl to the consideration of her own hurts; but turning and seeing Barton, who had sunk down in a chair, while the child clung round his neck screaming from fright, the outrageous vixen ran towards them, swearing she would be revenged,—but she was immediately laid hold of by two men, who were called in by little Sall's saying, "her mistress would kill them all outright."

They ran up stairs just in time to take her from her purposed vengeance; and her disappointment, with her loss of blood and ungovernable rage, threw her into fits.

The sufferings of Barton cannot be expressed; but leaving her to the care of some women to whom her bad temper was well known, he left the house with all speed, and proceeded to Broad-Street.—He was there within five minutes after the lady

lady had come home; and being admitted, he detailed the whole of the foregoing scene. She was extremely shocked that there should exist a being so disgraceful to her sex and humanity, and assured him that she would protect his little charge.

He then related to her that chance had thrown the child into his hands, through the humanity of Thompson, who had found her a deserted orphan; mentioned the provision he had made for his protégée out of his little modicum of pay, and from the small sum dearly earned by many years of severe duty.

The narration drew tears from the lady, and the warmest encomiums on Thompson.

Barton then declared his resolution to separate from his wife, and return to seek his bread on that element, far less turbulent than the stormy passions of the vixen under whose tyranny he had groaned above four years, in the "snug birth" of a Tobacco Warehouse.

This determinate resolution the lady could not condemn. She had seen and heard enough to justify his estrangement from such a termagant; and advised his present return, to secure what effects were justly his own, without diminishing her property. She recommended to him by no means to let her know in what manner he had disposed of the child; but to take his baggage to an inn, and leave it there till night, when he might bring it to her house, and remain in it till he could procure a warrant from the Navy Board, to obtain which he should have her interest.

Barton with joy and gratitude followed these directions; but before he went home he called upon Thompson's agent, to forbid the payment of any more money to his wife, from whom he had been compelled to take the child, and place it in the protection of a generous humane lady, who would regularly send for the money, (for so she had told him she would do) and keep

keep it for Fanny's use hereafter, but her name must never be revealed.

The agent *happened* to be a just and benevolent man; and believing the child to be the lieutenant's, very readily promised to acquiesce in the lady's request, *her name and character* being well known to him.

Barton having thus settled every thing beyond his best hopes for little Fanny and himself, sallied home with an erect head, and an easy mind; prepared to weather the storm which had ultimately conducted him into a safe harbour, with a prospect of favouring gales to launch him once more on the great ocean of life.

When he entered the shop, little Sall with a woe-begone face was sitting behind the counter; she expressed her joy at his return,—"Mistress is in the parlour," said she, "but very bad and mortal angry."

He opened the door, she was sitting in a low chair, her head on a pillow, and with her the neighbour who had witnessed her

outrageous behaviour.—"Oh, you vile man!" exclaimed she, as loud as her really reduced state would admit of, "you have been the death of me, and then runned away when you had killed me. Where is that little cursed plague that brought about all the mischief?"

Without answering her, he addressed the person with her.—"Mrs. Smith," said he, "you well know I never lifted a finger against my wife in my life, I would sooner die than be such a cowardly rascal as to strike a woman; nor did I ever say an unkind word, or use her ill. I have borne such treatment as no man who had feeling would have put up with;—I will bear it no longer—I shall leave her this day, and hope never to see her more."

In spite of her weakness and disordered head, she again exclaimed, and abused him in the grossest terms, (though reprimanded by her companion) and again demanded the child.

"You

"You will see it no more," said he, "I have *safely disposed of her*, and forbidden the agent to pay you one shilling more on her account. I shall now take *her clothes*, and *my own*, and leave you for ever. I desire to have nothing from *you*, I would not have a rope's end that belongs to you for the world.—However, I wish you no harm, and hope you will behave better in future."

If he was astonished at her silence during this long harangue, he was not less terrified. The woman, attentive to him, had not observed her, till his sudden exclamation caused her to turn her head, when she beheld Mrs. Barton in a fit, occasioned by the violence of her passion struggling with the weakness of her body.

He sent the girl for a surgeon who lived just by, and had before attended her. He treated her disorder very lightly, said it was only the effects of intemperate passion, and ordering the usual remedies, walked off.

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In fact she soon recovered, but for the present was unable to exert the force of her eloquence; and he seized the temporary calm to take Mrs. Smith up stairs with him, while he packed up his own clothes, and the few necessaries which were the child's.—"You are now witness," said he, "that I take nothing which Mrs. Barton can call her's. I received six pounds this morning, which with one guinea I had in my pocket, is all the money I have, or shall take. She will recollect, I put forty-three pounds into her lap soon after I married her. And now, Mrs. Smith, God bless you!—Once more I shall trust to the sea, as the lesser evil, than the constant storms I have been beat about in on shore."

He then took up his trunk, and with her assistance carried it into the shop; and while he sent the girl for a coach, he stept in to his wife, who though scarcely able to articulate her words, was still abusing *him*, his

his *cheating mess-mate,* and the *vile hussey's brat!*

He told her what he had done, to which Mrs. Smith was a witness.—"I have not robbed you of a farthing,—I leave you better off than when I married you, and I now begin the world again, and hope to get peace, and a crust of bread; which will be far better than the best dinner I have ever shared in this house. Mary, amend your life, subdue your passions, and Heaven bless you."

He hastily left the room as a coach stopt, put in his trunk, and drove from the door to Wood-Street. At an inn there he rested till night, when bag and baggage he proceeded to the house of the noble-minded Mrs. Fitzwilliam, the protectress of his little Fanny.

In less than a week, by the interest of this lady, Barton obtained a warrant as first mate to the surgeon, on board of a seventy four gun ship, and was by her bounty amply

ply supplied with every necessary to make him comfortable in his situation.

She assured him that his humane consideration of the poor orphan, and his patient forbearance under his wife's ill treatment, had given him an interest in her esteem, which she hoped would hereafter place him in a better station; but having been so long out of practice, a subordinate one, for the present, might better answer her views to serve him.

Barton was exactly of a correspondent opinion; he took leave of her with a truly grateful heart, embraced and shed tears over little Fanny, and begged she might be taught to lisp the name of Thompson when she could talk.

He very wisely, however, reflected on the prejudices of mankind. While the child was in his arms, when he first waited on Mrs. Fitzwilliam, he said—"The child was an orphan, a namesake of his friend's, who saw her mother taken from her by death, and

and had immediately adopted her, from the purest humanity, and the strange story trumped up by his wife was an imagination of her own."

Whether Mrs. Fitzwilliam believed the story to be imaginary, is not to the purpose, she saw it was a helpless orphan whom it was the highest act of charity to rescue from such an unfeeling violent woman; and if there was a mystery attached to the poor thing's birth, she did not desire to seek into it.—The child was lovely and interesting, thrown on the wide ocean of life without any natural protectors, it therefore claimed her compassion and was sure to obtain it.

Thompson's agent was acquainted with the residence of little Fanny, and the name of her protectress, that satisfied Barton; and he proceeded to Portsmouth with a light heart, and a mind more at ease than he had experienced since the first month that

that he became the *nominal* master of a Tobacco Warehouse.

Mrs. Barton, when recovered from her temporary illness, was nearly distracted in mind at the desertion of her husband, the carrying off of Fanny, and the loss of her guinea and a half a month, besides other expectancies. So many concurrent causes to irritate a disposition like her's, pre-disposed to violence, had all the effect that might be expected; and though she had no more fits, her rage and abuse lasted many days, till her neighbours and customers shut their ears against her.

Neither curiosity nor enquiries gave her any light relative to the disappearance of Barton; and she was compelled at length to give up a fruitless search, and content herself with invective, and threats of making him pay dearly for his baseness in deserting a good industrious wife, because she had discovered the vile imposition put upon her by two such base men.

Day

Day after day she watched for the return of the woman, whose ready recollection had been the cause of this "terrible break-up of domestic comfort," for such was her complaint;—but she saw her no more.

She called, however, at Newgate, to make enquiries about the mother and child, but nobody seemed disposed to attend to her, and she gained little more information than the woman had afforded to her,—"That the mother was a thief and a murderer, and died in the prison the night before she was to have been executed." To this intelligence she added her own embellishments, and poor Barton was *condemned by her* as an accomplice, who had *fled from her* to avoid farther discovery of his wickedness.

'Tis thus that stories are promulgated, tending to destroy the reputation and wound the feelings of the innocent.—A mixture of truth and falsehood, blended so as not easily to be separated, are by base and

and invidious persons wantonly sported to the world; and characters are often irreparably injured before they are known to be in danger—since 'tis a sad truth, that mankind are but too well disposed to credit evil reports, and give them *their pass* from one to another, with every aggravation malicious fancy can invent.

We shall now, with much pleasure, take leave of Mrs. Barton, and leave her to the solitary comforts of her tobacco warehouse, the pleasures of invective and fruitless expectation, with the sorrowful regret of losing her monthly pay, and look back on our naval hero, who had sailed with prosperous gales, lively hopes, and a heart full of good-will to all mankind.

CHAPTER

## CHAPTER V.

"It is painful to the last degree to paint a man in the dark shades which his vices have cast upon him; yet when it serves the purpose of making vicious principles detestable, it carries its own excuse with it, and may prove a useful lesson."

IT was the third day after the Vengeance sailed, that Thompson, retiring earlier from the dinner table, being not yet so well initiated in the free use of the bottle, as to venture beyond his glass of grog, recollected the manuscript given to him by the unhappy mother of his little protégée. Taking it from his trunk, he seated himself to peruse the papers which he had hitherto been too

too much engaged to pay the requisite attention he supposed they might claim from their bulk. Nor was he mistaken, as the roll contained many sheets of paper to the following effect.—(The solemn appeal to the person into whose hands they might fall, has already been mentioned.)

"*The crimes, the wrongs, and sorrows of Ellen.*

"Whoever thou art, whether man or woman, into whose hands these papers are committed, may they impress on your heart the sad story of an unhappy, betrayed, and too credulous female, who was once good, virtuous, and well-disposed; who loved virtue and abhorred vice, but who was drawn into dishonour, shame, and guilt, not through a depravity of heart, but by deceit, perfidy, the credulity of affection, and the turpitude of an abandoned wretch, whose crimes are now before the eye of a just, and avenging God.

By

"By his holy and unchangeable decree, we are taught to believe, "that *he* will *judge us*, as *we* have performed our duties to our fellow creatures, and that retributive justice will assuredly follow our good or evil deeds." Think then, O, man! how great will be thy condemnation, how severe, how bitter thy punishment, who, by the most false delusive arts, by a profanation of vows, of sacred oaths, and a violation of every tie, of every duty which binds man to his fellow-creature, shall seduce virtue into vice; deceive the unsuspecting heart of innocence, rob a parent of a duteous child, heap sorrow, shame, and disgrace on the hoary head of age, and by a horrid gradation, plunge an unhappy deluded victim into a dreadful gulph of guilt, horror, and madness!

"Oh! that this horrid tale may impress an awful lesson on the minds of the young and inexperienced female—that it may teach her to shun the voice of delusion, the arts of assumed

assumed tenderness, the specious reasoning, oaths, and vows of the vile seducer, who seeks to draw her from the paternal roof, to violate the first great duty implanted in our hearts, of love and filial duty, and to spurn from her sight, that wretch who selfishly prefers his own gratification to her honour, self-respect, and the duties imposed by religion, virtue, and gratitude; the violation of which will, most assuredly plunge her into vice, shame, repentance, and remorse—remorse, of all human miseries the most bitter, lasting, and unavailing!

"*My name was lost* from the moment my weak heart, and erring feet forsook the house of my dear indulgent parents; may it sink into oblivion with me, and be no more remembered!—That the lost unhappy writer will expire without her real name being known is one source of consolation, and the only mark of respect I can ever shew to a revered relative.

"My

"My father inherited a small paternal estate of six hundred a year, it matters not in what county; and at an early age married an amiable woman of respectable connections, with three thousand pounds, which was settled upon younger children.

"After his marriage he was desirous to improve his estate, for the benefit of a probable encrease to his family, and in a few years succeeded to his wish.

"My father had been, as a second son, educated for the church; but his elder brother dying before he was of age to take orders, and his inclination being decidedly for a quiet country life and farming, he returned to his father, and succeeded him very soon after in his paternal estate.

"My mother had, from childhood, been educated by a maiden aunt, of good sense and strict principles, far from the metropolis, and very little accustomed to company. It was at a watering-place, where the ill health of her aunt brought my mother,

ther, that my father first saw her, and a reciprocal affection was the consequence of frequent interviews.

"His offers were deemed unexceptionable, and the old lady advanced the money I have mentioned, with a verbal promise of twice as much at her death.

"The young couple were married, and when about to return to their home, both were desirous the aunt should accompany them, but she objected to that plan, as she wished to go to her own house, settle all her affairs, and then reside with them entirely. To this design, as she had with her an old and confidential servant, whose integrity was indisputable, they could make no objection; but to be brief on the subject, within three weeks after their return, the aunt forgot all her vows of celibacy, and married the lawyer who had drawn up my mother's marriage settlement, consequently every future expectation from her was vanished into air.

"One

"One child, who saw the light two years before myself, were all the children my dear mother ever bore, and never were children more idolized, or parents more indulgent.

"Oh, that I could dwell for ever on this early period of my life!—My heart throbs and my hand trembles to record the sad reverse of domestic happiness, fated to be destroyed by an unhappy, infatuated wretch, who forgot in an evil hour her duty to God, to her parents, and to herself.

"I was just turned of seventeen, was what the world calls tolerably accomplished, with *more than a tolerable person.* I may say it now, I cannot be suspected of vanity in these dreadful moments, if I should assert that I was at that time, generally allowed to be a very lovely young woman, not devoid of understanding, or good humour; with a humane and susceptible heart, a stranger to the delusions of mankind, and

so lost, and so lamented!—But whither do I wander?—Let me try to proceed.

"A dreadful cold appeared to have settled on my mother's lungs; my father, extremely alarmed, urged a journey to the Hot-Wells, and strengthened by the advice of the physician, he prevailed on her to set off at a very short notice. I was to accompany her, for we had never been separated for a single week; and however trying to my father to lose "both of his darlings," anxiety for the health of a beloved wife superseded every other consideration.

"We had not been more than ten days at the Wells, before my dear mother derived benefit from the waters; and I had the heart-felt delight of conveying such information to my father, as inspired hope, and gratitude to Heaven.

"In the next house to the one we lodged in, resided the *Right Honourable* Lord C—. Oh! what a perversion of

words!—Right Honourable to be attached to the name of the most base and profligate of mankind. I had seen him several times at the Wells; he had paid us marked attention, and shewn several little civilities to my beloved mother, which gave him a title to my respect and complaisance.

"He was about six and twenty, tall, elegantly formed, a countenance, if not remarkably handsome, yet more than agreeable; it was intelligent and expressive, from the finest eyes I ever beheld, with manners so polished, so captivating, as could not fail of engaging the regards of all those he was solicitous to please.

"What a being was this to be thrown in the way of a very young and inexperienced girl, brought up in the school of virtue, integrity, and every social duty; a stranger to deceptive arts, grateful for every mark of attention shewn to a beloved mother, who, as well as her poor daughter, judged with candour and liberality of mankind,

kind, from the worthy hearts in her own little circle. Unsuspecting of evil, and pleased with the open friendliness of Lord C—'s conduct, whose assiduity to her seemed to proceed solely from principles of humanity, (so guarded and deceptive was his behaviour) this dear mother frankly gave him her esteem, and admired the goodness of his heart, and the rectitude of his principles;—while the base insidious villain was forming schemes to destroy all her worldly happiness, to reduce an innocent unsuspecting girl beneath the meanest of her sex, if virtuous, and blast the fond hopes of paternal fondness, by a degradation of its object,—a million times more wounding to the heart than the stroke of death, which if it annihilated hope in this life, would have left a sweet remembrance of filial virtue, and the consoling idea of meeting in a better world. The tears of parental tenderness would have embalmed her grave, while time, and a submission to

the will of Heaven would have ameliorated the sorrows of christian parents.

"This dear consoling hope I wrested from them for ever, and received, instead of blessings, deserved execrations;—in one unhappy hour I became a wretched deluded creature, a guilty parricide, a disgrace to my family and sex, an outcast by the world, —and the climax is—a horrid, shameful death!!!

"Yes, such will be my last closing scene, such the expiation I must make for my many crimes!—My brain turns, I must lay down my pen.

"Though guilty I am not hardened, sorrow, remorse, and deep contrition, will I humbly hope be accepted at the throne of grace;—*there* mercy will not spurn the truly repentant sinner, though the cruel world shut their ears and hearts against an erring fellow-creature.

"I have addressed myself to an all-merciful Being, am a little more composed, and hasten

hasten to resume my sad narrative, while I have powers to recollect, and to write.

"Lord C— was attending an uncle, whose declining health had brought him to the Wells, and within a few days after his arrival, had been attacked with a violent rheumatic gout, which confined him wholly to his apartment; his nephew, therefore, wandered about in search of amusement, and most unhappily fixed upon me as the object of his pursuit.

"His character was that of a consummate hypocrite. At the earliest age he had acquired a command over his passions, a system of deception which blinded the eyes of all those whose authority and good opinion were of consequence to his establishment in life; and while he imposed on a worthy relative, to the entire exclusion of his elder brother, who possessed the estates and titles of their father, in private, in disguises, equally shameful to his rank and every principle of honour, he became an

adept in vice, and at five and twenty was devoid of every sentiment of humanity, every respect to the laws both divine and human, and with a callosity of heart scarcely credible, held the language of truth, virtue, and feeling, to impose on the world and secure his victims.

"Such a deviation from rectitude, in one so young, may appear an exaggeration in character, and an outrage on truth; but, alas! that such a being does exist, I have fatally been convinced, and shall seal the conviction with my forfeited life.

"A new object, in a certain style of life, above the commonality, is sure to attract notice in all those places of public resort, whether in pursuit of health or of pleasure. I soon found myself very particularly distinguished, and among others by Sir Gilbert Mervin, who, knowing my mother's family, and several of her juvenile acquaintance, made himself known, and was recognised

recognised by her in the light of an old friend.

"This gentleman was near thirty, and was generally esteemed as a very handsome man. He had truly every amiable trait in his disposition which Lord C— so ostentatiously displayed; his character was that of a worthy country gentleman, who, following the examples of his forefathers, preferred a residence in the country, among his tenantry, to the gay frivolities of London, for the dissipated amusements of which he had, happily, no taste.

"Sincere, upright, generous, and humane, the preference of a heart like his, conferred a distinction, and courted acceptance. Why, why, was I too late convinced of his worth, and miserably awakened from the blind confidence reposed in the most dissimulative, basest of mankind!— Alas! that an error in judgment, the delusion of the senses, in an unadulterated mind at seventeen, should be so severely pu-

nished, and one false step not only blast her fame, but by an imperceptible gradation sink her into a vortex of crimes which conducts her to a premature grave!

"But how I digress,—forgive, ye who peruse this paper, forgive the wanderings of a tortured heart, and a distracted head.

"'Tis with a deeply humbled pride that I now mention the general admiration which followed my appearance in the rooms. It was not in human nature to be insensible, or wholly devoid of vanity; I confess that *I felt a proud gratification in my triumph over many titled and lovely young women.* Nor can it be wondered at, if a fond mother, almost as new to the world as her girl, should be no less delighted with the almost adoration and respect which attended me every where, and drew on several applications to her for permission to address her daughter.

"My mother's answer to all, except Sir Gilbert Mervin, was, that I was too young, and

and too little acquainted with the world, to be decided in my choice as yet; that she could not encourage any pretensions, however honourable, as we should return home to my respectable father, whose approbation or rejection would entirely guide her choice, and doubtless have its due influence over the mind of his daughter.

"Among the several pretenders to my favour, Lord C— alone remained silent; whilst by every shew of tenderness, every fascinating art, he sought insidiously to steal into my heart, and by exciting an anxiety on my part for an open avowal of his passion, pique both my love and pride to add him to the list of my admirers.

"Alas! he knew every avenue to the female heart, mine was seduced before I knew it was in danger.—Unadulterated by art, unsophisticated by fashion, and a stranger to the deceptions of base unprincipled men, I was unprepared to resist the infectious tenderness, the persuasive eloquence

quence of melting sounds, or the irresistible and undescribable language of eyes beaming softness and admiration,—and in the intermediate period of my mother's convalescence, the heart of her unhappy daughter was irrecoverably lost.

"When in the presence of that dear dear parent, his behaviour was so guarded, that she had no idea of any intelligence subsisting between us; and modesty kept me from betraying my own partiality, or unfolding to her the nature of my feelings.—Miserable error! injudicious delicacy! a confidence in my beloved parent would doubtless have preserved me from ruin, disgrace, and death!

"When this dear mother referred every application to my father, my guileful betrayer took advantage of her declaration. It was then unnecessary to make an open avowal of his passion to any but my father, and the particular situation of his uncle, forbade any immediate application, from motives

motives of delicacy, and something of interest, the fortune of his uncle being very considerable; and, as old men were capricious, it was possible he might take offence, that his nephew should engage in an affair of the heart, when *he* was on the bed of sickness.

"Every word *he* uttered, was to me "confirmation strong as proofs of Holy Writ;" my confidence was as unbounded as my love was sincere.—I admired, I revered the amiable manners, and apparently good heart of Sir Gilbert Mervin, I respected and esteemed him, but I could go no farther; for I saw every distinguishing feature in his character, in a brighter point of view in Lord C—, with a fascinating tenderness and adulatory language, such as the other disdained to use, but which were both too gratifying to a vain girl of seventeen.

"The time arrived for our departure, before which Lord C— had completely gained

gained over the girl who attended us to his interest, and settled our future correspondence.—Through her means we had several private interviews, in one of which he drew from me a solemn vow not to mention our mutual passion to either of my parents, until he was at liberty openly to claim my hand from my father; assigning as a reason for such a request, the caprice and pride of an old man, and the probable loss of an immense property, which he hoped one day to share with my angel-self. But if, contrary to expectation, his uncle *should* recover, he would then freely confess his sentiments, and had no doubt, but in happier hours, when freed from the peevishness of pain and disease, his uncle would acquiesce, and not withhold his consent for the happiness of his nephew.

"What sophistry was this!—Alas! it had every thing in it, but truth, which could impose upon a fond unsuspecting heart. I readily gave credit to all,—vowed I would

be

be his, and only his, and that neither persuasions nor threats should tear me from him.

"His jealous eye had penetrated into the secret wishes of Sir Gilbert, he knew his merits, and saw that he was a favourite with my mother. — Without, therefore, giving me the least hint of Sir Gilbert's affection, of his interest with my mother, or the probable influence he might obtain in his pretensions to my hand, he always spoke of him as a *good kind of man*, singular and unfashionable, but an honest country gentleman, — and these sort of negative praises were given in a cold careless way, as if Sir Gilbert Mervin was an object of little consequence, and scarcely noticed by him; and of course *I* esteemed this "good sort of man," without giving him the least interest in my heart.

"When we left the Wells, it was with inconceivable difficulty that I could tear myself from Lord C—, without a discovery of

of my feelings; but he had taught me art, and gave me a lesson for my conduct, in the painful observance of which I so over acted my part, that only my dear mother's confidence in her ungrateful daughter could have shielded me from suspicion.

"She very cordially thanked Lord C— for his many civilities, and requested, if business or pleasure should ever bring him into our neighbourhood, that he would honour us by a friendly visit.

"He assured her, "it was one of his best hopes that he should soon avail himself of her polite invitation."

"This answer I interpreted in my own manner, as alluding to his open pretensions to my favour, and it in some degree softened the pangs of parting.

"Sir Gilbert was our escort, for my mother had accepted his offer to attend us home. I saw then that he was a decided favourite, and I am ashamed to confess *that preference* gave him no additional claims to

to mine; one object only occupied my heart, and swallowed up all other regards, for I found even the warm embraces of a beloved father, which used to give me the highest transports, now scarcely created the slightest emotion, and I felt glad to retire to my apartment, and converse with Nelly, who alone knew of my engagements to Lord C—.

"From that hour I may note the date of my future wretchedness, for I was in the power of a mercenary hireling, who was the depositary of my secrets, and assisted me to deceive my parents.

"Oh! should it so happen that these pages fall into the hands of young inexperienced females, let them hear my warning voice, *as from the grave.* Let them beware of the specious seducer, who would withdraw the confidence of a child from her mother;—fly, fly from every attempt made to separate you from that unalienable duty and gratitude due to your first and best

best friend, and be assured, that the moment in which you are drawn into a clandestine correspondence, is the *last of your tranquillity!*—peace will for ever leave your bosom, and an imperceptible gradation into guilt, follow the breach of filial duty.

"The tenderness of maternal love may become a consolation and a cure for most of the evils of life, but woe to that unhappy being whose crimes have robbed her of that sacred resource against the perfidy of mankind, or the unavoidable misfortunes attached to suffering humanity!

"When tortured by filial ingratitude, by a conscious sense of having embittered the life, and added to the solemn scene of death the heart-felt sorrow of an unworthy and degenerate daughter,—gracious Heaven! where can the miserable guilty wretch turn for comfort; where fly from the gnawing vulture's tooth, sharpened by remorse and soul-harrowing reflection!!!"

CHAPTER

## CHAPTER VI.

"No more to thee the joyous morn appears
"That led the tranquil hours of spotless fame,
"For thou hast steep'd a father's couch in tears,
"And ting'd a mother's glowing cheek with shame."

"IN a very few days after our return to that habitation once so dear to me, I received, through the medium of Nelly, a letter from Lord C—, breathing the very soul of tenderness, conjuring me to remember my solemn engagement, and anticipating the expected delight of meeting, to pay the torturing pangs of absence.—But it is unnecessary to repeat the common-place language

language of artful designing lovers;—my inexperience in deception, rendered me an easy credulous dupe, and every sentiment was treasured in my heart.

"Sir Gilbert, mean time, whose bosom glowed with a pure and ardent attachment, whose love was accompanied with diffidence, and his very desire to please, threw an air of confusion and restraint in his manner that by no means prepossessed me in his favour, elated as I was by vanity and a false confidence in an ardent impetuous lover.—This truly amiable man, encouraged by my parents, who justly estimated his character, exerted himself in endeavours to gain my approbation, and make himself an interest in my favour; but my heart was closed against him, and the coldness of my manner, too unequivocally convinced him of what he had before suspected, that I was attached to Lord C—, though he had too much honour and delicacy to mention his suspicions to my parents.

"One

"One morning my father and mother came into a small parlour I had been allowed to call my own, the former said,—they were come to make me a visit.—As this was not very uncommon, it never entered my head they had particular motives, until, after some desultory conversation, he mentioned Sir Gilbert Mervin, in terms of high commendation, in which I unaffectedly joined; for I had, as I have observed, an *esteem* for him, though *affection* was otherwise disposed of.

"My mother then told me, with pleasure sparkling in her eyes, that he had requested permission to address me, and she was delighted to find I thought so highly of him.

"This brought on an explanation on my part, and an absolute refusal to accept the offer of Sir Gilbert's hand. They were extremely surprised at my peremptory manner; both alternately urged me to reflect, to be less decisive, and to admit him as a candidate

"Oh, never let *her* warning voice plead in vain,—'tis the voice of nature's God, and to disregard it, is the first step towards guilt, remorse, and wretchedness!

"But I surmounted the shock of my feelings, and simply assured my beloved parent, equivocally, that I had too much pride to have a particle of regard for any man who had not a decided preference for me; but that, in short, I was very young, I wished to see more of the world, and requested Sir Gilbert would think no more of me, since as a husband I would *never receive him.*

"*Never!*" repeated my mother, "ah, my dear girl, I fear, much I fear, you are not candid; you do not act generously towards a mother, whose every hope of happiness is centered in you. Reflect, my beloved child, let my heart be the repositary of your secret; there it shall rest if you wish it, but do not deprive me of your confidence. I will leave you, your own feelings

feelings and good sense will direct you to what is right, if you do *me* justice, and follow the admonition of your conscience."

"She rose to leave me, the tones of her voice, and the sorrow imprinted on her features overcame me,—I burst into tears.

"Oh," said she, embracing me, "these are precious drops! they restore my child to confidence in her mother!"

"Just Heaven! what a selfish narrower of the heart is love!—that love which improperly indulged soon teaches its votaries *reserve*, if not dissimulation; and imperceptibly slides into errors the mind would have rejected with horror.

"How else could I have withstood the tender inquietude of maternal anxiety, and silenced the voice of nature, to hold fast my rash and indiscreet vow to Lord C—?

"My dear mother waited till the first burst of tears were abated; then pressing my hand, said,—"Speak, my child, confide in me."

"I have nothing to confide; I have no secrets, nothing to disclose, but my absolute aversion to Sir Gilbert Mervin as a husband."

"My mother dropped my hand; she sighed, and after a little pause, with an anguished look, said,—"If, as I now begin to fear, you have a prepossession in favour of Lord C—, you will do well to consider the improbability of any honourable connection with him. His family are not less distinguished by pride than by rank; his dependance on a proud, avaricious uncle is well known, and if he has sought to engage your affections unknown to me, he has shewn a defalcation from honour and principle, which entirely deprives him of *my good opinion*, and ought to make you despise *him*, or *any man*, who seeks to draw a young woman from the duty she owes to her parents."

"She stopped—I was silent—she resumed,—"New to the world, my child, you

you may have been led into an error by the artful flatteries of an insidious man; 'tis not too late *now* to recover from the first false step, to reflect that if Lord C— loves you honourably he would address himself to your parents. He would spurn the idea of deceiving your mother, whose esteem he had obtained by (what I begin to fear was a simulation) an appearance of honour and principle; he would consider, that a man can have but small reliance on the truth of a wife, who as a daughter could for a moment consent to deceive her parents. He is a man of the world, he is not ignorant of the duties imposed by nature, by virtue, truth, and delicacy; and be assured, the woman who violates these principles will never be the wife of Lord C—. I will not further oppress you," continued this dear mother; "you will seek me, my dear, when you choose to make a confidant of your best and only true friend."

"She left me. Both my feelings and my reason pointed out the line I ought to pursue; but all-powerful love, and the vow which bound me to secresy, over-ruled the admonitions of conscience, and confirmed my resolution to adhere to my promise.

"Unhappy wretch! had I then but considered that extorted vows, contrary to my first duty, could not be binding; had I been candid and just, what miseries had I escaped from, which now have sealed my fate in the blackest die within the catalogue of human crimes.

"If I have been prolix thus far in my narrative, it is to prepare myself to relate events that turn my blood cold with horror. 'Tis a dreadful task that I have imposed upon myself; and may the warning of a miserable being, self-convicted, and condemned by the laws of her country, sink deep into the heart of every female who hears my sad story.

"I

"I am now come to a period which I shall rapidly proceed in.

"When my mother quitted my apartment, I hastened to detail the preceding conversation to Lord C—, and gave my letter to Nelly, when I was summoned to dinner. Sir Gilbert was not at the table; I trembled when seated by the side of my mother. My father looked serious, but not angry; when he spoke it was with kindness, and my dear mother was as affectionate as usual.

"I was conscious how little I deserved their indulgence; my heart smote me, I shuddered at every kind expression, but my firmness did not relax. In the hope that my letter would produce an immediate visit from Lord C—, to which I urged him, I persevered in silence; and wounded the tender hearts of my parents, from a point of honour to the most abandoned of mankind.

"In the evening Nelly told me she had overheard part of a conversation between Sir Gilbert and my father. The former said,—"I beg, I entreat you, Sir, not to *urge* your charming daughter in my favour, if her heart declares against me; for a thousand worlds I would not be an object of persecution to her who I love far beyond myself. I beseech you, let not the subject be mentioned again. Permit me to try if the most tender solicitudes, the most perfect affection, more to be shewn in deeds than by words, can make an impression on her heart; and if after a few weeks I shall find a favourable opportunity to explain my sentiments, and should then be rejected, I will retire for ever from her and happiness and submit to my fate, and while I lament the want of those qualities requisite to gain her approbation, I shall at least have the consolation to know, I have entitled myself to her esteem, by ceasing to avail myself of your kind partiality."

"Sir

"Sir Gilbert," returned my father, "you are the most generous of men. Far be it from me to force a reluctant consent from my child, but if she persists in her present, I hope capricious, resolution, *I shall lament* the blindness of my daughter, and my own loss of a dear and invaluable son."

"This part of a conference, very correctly repeated by Nelly, forced from me, in spite of my prejudice, a warm admiration of Sir Gilbert.—I felt the tender delicacy of his behaviour, and even regretted that I had no heart to give him.

"But these proper sentiments, extorted by uncommon merit, soon passed away; and left only the pleasing reflection, that his generosity had procured me a temporary respite from any further conversations on a subject so painful.

"It was after the sixth day that I had sent off a letter to Lord C—, that in the evening my servant gave me a note from him, in which he merely told me that he

was arrived in the village, had communications of the utmost importance to make, which required a private interview; and entreated me to meet him in Nelly's apartment, which adjoined the laundry, was detached from the other servants by a narrow passage, and had a staircase opening into the yard, the key of which door she generally could command, as it hung in the laundry. He conjured me not to refuse him, as his life and happiness depended solely on me.

"Weak and imprudent as I was, yet I was fully sensible of the impropriety of this step, and expressed something like reluctance.—"Good Lord, Miss!" cried the girl, "pray don't deny my lord, he will surely kill himself, he is nigh distracted already about that nasty Sir Gilbert.—Not to be sure but what he's a handsome good humoured gentleman, but, dear heart, my lord is an angel, and you will be a countess, and I should so like to live with a countess!

"Pray,

Pray, Miss, let me go and say you will meet my lord?"

"Well, go then," I replied, "I don't much like it, but I have not courage to refuse him."

"She did not wait a second permission, but was off in a moment.—My mind was in tumults undescribable;—love, joy, fear, with a secret repugnance I could not shake off, by turns assailed me.—At the supper table I complained of a slight indisposition, to account for an agitation I could not repress, and retired early to my room, my dear mother obliging me to take a medicinal cordial; and when I wished her good-night, she tenderly kissed me, with the hope that I should be quite well in the morning.

"Oh! best of women, most amiable of mothers! oh what a deceitful guilty wretch did you bestow your affectionate caress.—Alas! we parted to meet no more!

"Between twelve and one I was informed, by my too officious servant, that my lord was in waiting.—Trembling every step, I hastened to the room. He threw himself at my feet, and poured forth such raptures of love, joy, and gratitude, that transported with delight and self-gratulation, I lost all remembrance of the improper indulgence I had granted; and, without even a wish to conceal my feelings, gave unequivocal proofs of the power he had obtained over my heart.

"When the joy of meeting was a little subsided, he reverted to the letter, which, he said, had thrown him into a state of distraction.—His uncle was still in an extremely precarious state of health, the medical people gave no hope beyond a few months of gradual decline, and therefore, he dared not, in such circumstances, agitate his mind; as unhappily he had such absurd yet strong prejudices in favour of rank and high birth, and no less avaricious than proud,

proud, that were he to suppose his nephew cast a thought on an untitled young woman, he should certainly lose both his favour and his estates.

"I felt a little proudly here, for my father's family were all very respectable, and my mother's no less so, though they had no quality relatives.

"He saw me draw up something haughtily, and hastened to disperse the rising resentment of self-love.—"Those very absurd prejudices, I despise from my soul," continued he; "your birth is in every point of view unexceptionable, and your beauty and merit entitle you to a diadem.—But, poor man! he will shortly be removed from all worldly concerns, and I shall then have a fortune worth your acceptance; a fortune and title which can afford me no joy, without you share it with me."

"Again he uttered raptures and admiration but too seducing to a heart already devoted to him;—exclaiming against the love

love of titles and riches, which impeded him from openly avowing his adoration of the most lovely of her sex.

"I asked, why he would not confide his secret to my mother, whose tenderness for me would induce her to reserve my hand for him when he was at liberty to claim it.

"You are most exceedingly mistaken," said he, "*she* is absolutely determined in favour of Sir Gilbert."

"I repeated the intelligence of Nelly—the conversation between him and my father.

"Ah!" said he, "you see things in a wrong light; this affected generosity in the baronet,—for be assured *it is affectation*,—he well knew would give him a greater interest in your father's esteem.—He is the most artful of men, under the mask of honour and principle.—They are deceived by his specious manners, and will never recede; they will rely on your tenderness, and you will assuredly be sacrificed to an impostor, who,

who, under the semblance of morals and frankness, conceals a depraved heart and a love for you which is merely personal."

"I must stop here to remark, with what intrepidity and baseness he traced his own character, unveiled the turpitude of his own heart, and affixed on a worthy man a stigma of contempt and detestation due only to himself.

"Alas! love and credulity, inexperience and candour, rendered me an easy believing victim to his falsehood.

"No!" I exclaimed, "no, I never will be sacrificed to such a wretch!—Much as I love my parents I have courage enough firmly to disobey commands tending to destroy my happiness for ever!—I will go to them, I will unmask his character."

"Ah!" rejoined he, interrupting me, "how little are you acquainted with the art, the perfidy, and prejudices of men!—How are you to unmask him?—Where are your proofs?—You must refer to me,—our

our secret will be discovered, and the loss of life in Sir Gilbert or myself, perhaps of both, will undoubtedly be the consequence. If he falls, I am ruined, and must fly my country;—if he proves successful with his sword, I shall expire without the possibility of saving you,—and *you*, dear suffering victim, will be forced into the arms of my murderer!"

"Oh! no, no!" I cried, tears gushing from my eyes, "never, no never, will I be his wife!—Never will I put your life in the hazard against his!—Good Heaven! what is to be done?—how shall I escape these dreadful evils which threaten my peace?"

"There is but one way possible, and for that I have prepared, in a conviction that I must *now secure*, or lose you for ever:—Fly with me immediately to Scotland, once married you can have nothing to dread from importunity or parental power.—Your parents have no suspicion of our attachment, and however partial they may be to

to Sir Gilbert, when I am at liberty to disclose my marriage, and raise you to that dignity your beauty and merit entitles you, 'tis impossible but they must be both pleased and proud of my alliance and your rank. My uncle cannot survive many weeks, possibly not more than five or six, during which time you shall live in an elegant retirement, until, my fortune being ascertained, concealment will be no longer necessary."

"While he thus insidiously sought to ensnare me, reason and modesty revolted against the proposition. I attempted to object and argue on the impropriety of his proposal; but never let a guileless, affectionate heart descend to *debate* any point with a daring, practised deceiver,—flight, scorn, and resolution, alone can save her. How truly says the poet,—

"The woman that deliberates is lost."

The unhappy being, who relying on her own strength, dares to enter into arguments,

ments, after hearing a proposal inimical to duty, virtue, and self-respect, is *assuredly lost*; and *I* am a miserable exemplifier of the assertion.

" I will not dwell further on his persuasive arts, or my weak resistance; 'tis sufficient to say, that he prevailed upon me to abandon the dear guides of my youth, and plunge at once into misery, and self-condemnation. Though drowned in tears, with a tortured heart, and a sense of the shame and reproach I drew on myself, I yet suffered my erring trembling feet to follow a vile seducer, and lifted into a carriage, became a wretch for ever ! ! !

" Nelly followed me into the carriage, which was the only circumstance from which I drew a small degree of consolation, as it seemed a mark of respect to my delicacy and peculiar situation; but it was many hours before I ceased to lament the bitter anguish of a fond mother, and the mingled

mingled grief and resentment of an affectionate father.

"It was in vain he represented to me, that their sorrow would be but temporary, and would be followed by pride and exultation; I was but too sensible that even temporary disgrace, however short in its duration, would leave an indelible impression on the mind of a man of honour, wounded in its confidence, and deserted by a darling child.

"But the die was cast, and I had to sooth my internal agony, one of the most insinuating and plausible of mankind; who if he could not convince my reason by his specious arguments, at least forcibly appealed to my heart, and by degrees lessened the violence of my emotions by his excessive tenderness, and fallacious promises of a speedy re-union with my family.

"On stopping at the inn where we were to pass the night, I was astonished to behold my trunks brought into the room.—

I threw a look of surprise and reproach on Lord C—, which he perfectly understood; and when the man withdrew, he anticipated my remarks, by candidly owning,—that he had come pre-determined not to go back without me, and trusting to my affection and judgment, when he adduced such indisputable reasons for escaping from an inevitable impending evil, as threatened the entire destruction of our mutual happiness, he had consulted with my servant, and engaged her to promise she would prepare the trunks unknown to me, and have them conveyed to the carriage during our conference.—And for this precaution he implored my favourable interpretation, since *my* comfort and convenience, were solely the objects of his consideration.

"Plausibly as he veiled over this *predetermined* plan to *compel* me into an elopement, I felt a secret pang at my heart in being betrayed into it, by the duplicity of Nelly, and a confidence in my weak acquiescence,

quiescence. But how short is the duration of displeasure against a seducive beloved object!—I had now gone too far to recede, and felt no other remorse than for the anxiety of my parents at the uncertainty of my destiny.

"On expressing this regret, I found his "*considerate prudence, to spare them pain,*" had induced him to convey a letter, through the medium of his officious confidante, at the first stage where we changed horses, to be forwarded to my father, intimating that I was gone to Scotland with a man of honour, to whom I had given my heart, and to avoid a marriage with a man *I detested.*

"If I was something reconciled to the premeditated steps taken on the presumption of his power over me, by the *comparative ease* which this letter would give to my parents, I felt a little indignant at the strong expression against Sir Gilbert, who had uniformly treated me with a respectful and

and unobtrusive tenderness, such as could by no means warrant an avowed *detestation*; because no defects in his character had appeared to us that justified it, and the developement of his principles had so recently been made known to me.

"I observed this to Lord C—, he made light of my feelings, with an observation in his turn, that Sir Gilbert's conscience would help him to an explanation; and then changed the subject to self-gratulation on his own happiness, and the certainty of soon restoring me to my family, as a countess, and, he flattered himself, as one of the happiest women in the kingdom.

"When I retired to my pillow, I could not repress many painful reflections, and a presentiment of future repentance and mortification.—The step I had been drawn into was so contrary to duty and delicacy, that all the flattering prospects held out by Lord C—, could not reconcile me to consider it otherwise than as a violation of principle

ciple which humbled me in my own eyes, and must degrade me in the opinion of the world, and *his connections* particularly.

"When with him, the sophistry of his persuasive eloquence hoodwinked my reason, and dazzled my imagination; but solitary reflection gave birth to painful ideas, and mortifying regrets.—Though seduced by love, and overpowered by the ardour of irresistible tenderness; my heart was not yet corrupted, it was still sensibly alive to the impropriety and ingratitude of my conduct to the best of parents.

"I passed a sleepless night, and met my lord, at breakfast, with a heavy eye, and a countenance that bespoke the perturbation of my spirits.

"He looked steadfastly at me, but was too polite to notice the discomposure he could not but observe. On the contrary, his expressions were rapturous, his words and actions equally tender and respectful, until the fascinating and infectious softness

stole

stole over my senses, and left room for no other object than himself.

"We proceeded rapidly on our journey; when we stopped to dine, he carelessly observed, we should be in London before night.

"In London!" I exclaimed, "are we not going to Scotland?"

"Certainly, my beloved Ellen.—But you do not suppose that I would leave it in the power of chance to rob me of you, by being overtaken in our journey there? to avoid which, by a circuitous road we shall soon arrive in London, where, in the house of a most respectable woman, you will rest two days, while I prepare a situation proper to receive you as its mistress, on our return from Scotland."

"Though there was a plausibility in this arrangement, yet I felt a sinking at my heart wholly unaccountable; and if I had nothing to oppose against it, neither did I feel satisfied.

"He

"He took notice of my silence, and again had recourse to the tenderest effusions of love and gratitude, and called upon me to give him great credit for this trial of impatient happiness; since in delaying his own felicity for my accommodation, he gave a proof of his self-denial, and attention to such comforts as the beloved adored wife of Lord C— ought instantly to be in possession of, when she became the wedded partner of his heart and name.

"If I have been too minute in narrating the scenes between Lord C— and myself, let me beforgiven; and let his insidious arts be deeply impressed on the memory of young and inexperienced females, if my sad story should make its way into the world, that they may early shun the deceptive tongue of flattery, and look with scorn and abhorrence on those men who seek to seduce them into a clandestine correspondence,—the first step towards infamy, sorrow.

sorrow, and repentance. — This caution cannot be too often repeated, since unhappily it is but too frequently neglected, till a terrible conviction proves its immutable truth.

"I will endeavour to be more concise, and without repeating any further conversations, briefly say, we arrived in London as the day was closing.—It was the end of October, and the air very cold, our glasses were drawn up, and I saw but little of the town, through which we drove very fast, and at length stopped at a handsome house, where a well-dressed fashionable looking woman met me, with a polite and cordial welcome, in a manner that shewed *I was expected.*

"This idea flashed upon my mind with a sense of conscious humiliation, from the *certain* triumph over my principles, which Lord C— had anticipated—and well he might; after drawing me in to deceive, and deny my confidence to a tender mother, every

every other false step was progressive;—the first error against duty and judgment decides our destiny.

"With a weight on my spirits I could not shake off, I entered a very elegant well-lighted apartment,—the lady, introduced as Mrs. Harwood, was officiously polite, and praised my person, complexion, eyes, &c. with so little reserve and delicacy, and in such very flattering terms, that I was more disgusted than gratified, at what I thought an unbecoming freedom to a stranger, and therefore was extremely cold in return to her adulatory civilities.

"My Lord C—'s behaviour was exceedingly tender, and politely respectful, which served to counterbalance the freeness in Mrs. Harwood's manners. We had a light handsome supper, after which I was shewn to a very excellent bed chamber and dressing room.

"Nelly was in raptures with the prospect of residing in London.—My thoughts were

too confused and desultory to find much pleasure; but fatigue and want of rest the preceding night threw me into a profound sleep for several hours, which greatly refreshed me.

"I should have observed, that Lord C— took leave of me after supper, as he was to sleep at his uncle's, whose house was in one of the squares. I was pleased at this arrangement, and met him on the following morning with more cheerful spirits, which no less delighted him.

"After breakfast he left me, to go in search of a house; lamenting that he was compelled to meet a party of his uncle's friends at dinner, the earl being too great an invalid to preside at the table himself.—I was not sorry to be alone, having some little arrangements to make necessary for my comfort in a journey to the north.

"Having observed this to Mrs. Harwood, "Bless me!" said she, "I think such a journey this time of the year a mighty absurd

surd plan;—my lord has only to wait three weeks, and you may be married in London, without risking the fatigue and accidents of travelling."

"I demanded an explanation. — She said,—we had only to fix ourselves in a house, give in our names at the parish church, be asked three times, and any parson would be obliged to marry us.

"Probably Lord C— is not acquainted with this mode, so very preferable to such a long journey?"

"Possibly not," returned she, "or if he is, he is too much in love to wait the proper time.—But if you approve of it, Madam, I will mention it when he comes in the evening?"

"I requested she would do so, and when he appeared, and with joy and tenderness intimated that he had already succeeded, in engaging a small elegantly furnished house, by the month only, as the evident decline of his uncle made it unnecessary to

take it for any specified length of time,—Mrs. Harwood abruptly entered upon the subject she had started to me.—

"Ah! my dear Madam," replied he, "do but consider, *three weeks*; why it is three ages, and I hope to prevail on this dear lady to proceed on our journey to-morrow."

"On this I frankly confessed a repugnance to the journey, warmly approved Mrs. Harwood's proposal, and, in short, demanded as a proof of his affection and complaisance to my wishes, that he would consent to forego *his plan*, and adopt our's, so much more agreeable to my feelings, my character and delicacy.

"He no longer presumed to oppose my desire; however reluctant on his side, it became him to submit to the punishment of self-denial, since I had made such pleas as he dared not attempt to refute.

"I received this acquiescence as a high compliment, and the satisfaction I derived from it, gave me unusual spirits.

"Alas!

"Alas! how could I for a moment suspect that this submission on his part was all fine acting—that I had become the dupe of a premeditated scheme between an unprincipled woman and a base systematic seducer!

"It was finally determined, that I should remove to my new house in two days, though Mrs. Harwood earnestly entreated the indulgence of a week with her, to which he peremptorily objected, as time would be lost in the requisite period of my residence in the parish. This opposition was compromised by an invitation to her to pass some time with me, which she accepted very readily.

"The following day I accompanied my lord and her to the house, which though in a neighbourhood, was a detached house, recently built and furnished, and, as I afterwards found, was in the Hampstead Road, about a mile from town; but houses being sprinkled pretty thick in the road, and my-

self wholly unacquainted with London and its environs, they passed it off as an airy part of the fashionable end of the town.

"I was extremely pleased with the situation, house, and furniture. Mrs. Harwood was to send in two women servants and a footman—a carriage was to be hired from a livery stable for the present; and, in short, every arrangement was made, requisite for my convenience and pleasure.

"Blind, infatuated, senseless wretch as I was!—Without one presentiment of evil, without one sentiment of remorse for the affliction and disgrace I had entailed upon my parents, in the proud hope that I should soon defeat malice, silence calumny, and appear before them, and the world, with an eclat that would confound hasty censurers, and demand respect and admiration—with these vain and delusive hopes I took possession of my new house, which was to be the grave of my innocence, and the tomb of all my earthly happiness! ! !"

CHAPTER

## CHAPTER VII.

"Alas! where can that unhappy being turn for comfort, who has rejected counsel, and despised advice; who suffers the just punishment of her crimes, inflicted by the very wretch for whose sake she had forfeited every blessing of life, and plunged a poisoned dagger into the hearts of her parents?"

"ENTERING on my new establishment, still attended by Nelly, and with Mrs. Harwood as a visitant, for the first two days only pleasure and proud exultation at my future prospects, took possession of my heart.—Lord C— passed two hours in the morning, and supped with us in the evening, so submissive and decorous as always to take

leave at twelve o'clock; which respect and delicacy greatly strengthened both my love and confidence.

"In this calm sunshine of expected happiness passed the three probationary weeks previous to our intended marriage.—I was mortified, indeed, to accept presents from his lordship, and determined to refuse all but absolute necessaries until I became his wife.—When I was decoyed away (for truly I may use that expression) from my father's mansion, I had only three guineas and a half with some silver in my pocket, and between nine and ten pounds in a drawer, which Nelly had put into a trunk with my linen.

"This little stock was not diminished, as I found every thing provided for me that could gratify vanity; and much more offered than I chose to accept.

"In this interval, there had been moments when I found it requisite to repulse with a proud feeling of delicacy, the *too rapturous*

*rapturous* attentions of Lord C—. Often offending, as quickly repentant, and pleading the most passionate fondness as an apology for these little excesses towards an *affianced bride,* he was too easily forgiven; but though I sometimes pardoned an infringement on decorum, yet I still preserved a conscious sense of what was due to virtue, and compelled *him* to *respect it also.*

"I have no doubt but that he hoped to have thrown me off my guard long before the time expired for the ceremony of marriage to take place,—nor will I arrogate to myself more virtue than I possessed; pride had at least an equal share in the fortitude which saved me from the contagion of his extravagant fondness.

"Often softened, my slumbering innocence was roused to repel his dangerous caresses, by the sudden recollection of the rank I aspired to, and the triumph I looked forward to, over unjust condemnation, and illiberal conjectures, when I returned into

the country as the Countess of M——. Thus, as the poet justly observes,—

"Pride saves men oft', and *women too* from falling."

But what availed the precautions of pride or virtue?—I had forfeited all pretensions to either, when I permitted myself to engage in a private correspondence, and was seduced from the house of my father; every subsequent evil was a thing of course, nothing less than a miracle could have saved me from the vile plotter, and I had not deserved a miracle should be wrought in my favour.

"The day at length arrived when I was to be united to the man I loved and trusted in.—The plea of necessity was urged for the marriage ceremony being performed in my own house, lest the circumstance should reach the ears of his uncle, Lord M——. Besides, Mrs. Harwood observed,—"it was more dignified, more correspondent to Lord C—'s rank, than a public exhibition in the church."

"Perfectly

" Perfectly convinced that it was equally binding, if performed by a clergyman, not a word of objection was urged on my part; and on that day which stamped me a wretch for ever, I was married to the vilest of his sex.

" Several days passed away in an intoxication of happiness, before I recollected that I ought now to satisfy the painful anxiety of my parents; depending on their secresy for the present, as it was impossible, my lord told me, that his uncle could survive above a month or two at most.

" It would have been heresy in me to doubt his truth;—he readily accorded to my wish for trusting my parents, and assured me he would enclose my letter in one from himself.

" Every care and anxiety was now removed from my heart; the respectful tenderness of an adoring husband filled my whole soul with love and gratitude.—Oh! days of joy, but of short duration! how bitterly,

bitterly, how severely have I paid for the transient happiness of a few weeks!—how soon did shame and horror overtake the presumptuous exultation of fond credulity!

"Four days after this fatal marriage, Lord C— introduced to me his most particular friend, Major Freeland, and to him I was announced as Lady C—, *in confidence*. This circumstance was very flattering to my pride, as I could not help feeling humbled by still retaining the assumed name of Thompson, with appearances so disadvantageous to my character.

"The major was nearly the age of Lord C—, in person very much his inferior; but he was animated, witty, and so full of anecdote, that I felt highly pleased by such an addition to our small circle.—With these gentlemen, Mrs. Harwood, and a young widow of her acquaintance, introduced to me as Mrs. Bateman, we made frequent excursions into the country, and passed some very pleasant days.

"There

"There were times, indeed, when I remarked silently that their conversation and actions were not altogether accordant with *my* ideas of delicacy and modesty; when my blushes and evident embarrassment could not pass unnoticed, and I was rallied excessively on my prudery, mauvaise honte, and little knowledge of life and manners.

"I was more desirous to give my companions credit for their superior vivacity, good breeding, and fashion, than to indulge a reserve and reprehension of freedoms, they declared were common in all polite circles; and drew on me their wit and ridicule, when I attempted to reprove them.

"Thus insensibly drawn on to tolerate licentiousness for wit, an unblushing effrontery in conversation, romping, and a hundred frolics, as they called them, certainly not decorous, and tending to weaken the barriers of delicacy, by unbecoming freedoms, which while my modesty shrank from,

from, I had not courage openly to resent or condemn.

"So powerful is example to contaminate the heart, and so dreaded is the force of ridicule upon young and inexperienced minds.—Obliged to endure what I could not approve, I was often dissatisfied on a review of the day's amusements; but when I reflected that I was a wife, I thought it was impossible his lordship would permit *undue liberties*, and that it must be my confined education, and the frigidity of my mother's manners which influenced my opinion and my feelings.

"I now began to be extremely uneasy that no answer arrived from my parents. I spoke of it to Lord C—, he confessed that he was not less hurt than surprised, adding, that for the sake of my peace, he would not object to my writing once more, and he would join in the signature.—"'Tis to gratify your duteous affection," continued he, "that I submit to this second application,

cation, otherwise, as my wife, I would not suffer a humiliation, even to a parent, in a point where the rank, fortune, and happiness of their child must appear established beyond their best hopes.—I can allow something for their resentment at first, but now, if they carry it further, I must be permitted to be the guardian of *your honour* as well as my own, and any overtures hereafter must proceed from them."

"So infatuated was I by love and gratitude, so self-satisfied with his attention to the dignity of my situation, that, wretch as I was, I forgot the deception and ingratitude of my conduct to the best of parents,—overlooked the wound the concealment of my marriage must have given to their affection and their honour, and had the hardiness and the insolence to feel more of resentment at their silence, than of contrition for the sorrow and disgrace I had inflicted on the authors of my being,—whose unsullied reputation had never received a stain,

stain, until the elopement of their unworthy daughter.

"I however availed myself of my lord's permission, and once more addressed my parents, in terms of duty and affection, without lessening the dignity of Lord C—'s wife; and to this letter he added a postscript, perfectly affectionate and condescending in the opinion of us both, and such as could not fail of drawing a kind answer.

"Satisfied with this arrangement, I gave up my whole soul to the delightful study of pleasing my husband; and he, in return, was passionately fond of me, and procured every amusement, except public ones, that could make time pass lightly and on the wings of pleasure.

"Still the conduct and very reprehensible freedoms among my associates, were repulsive to my feelings; and one day, when compelled to join in their romping frolics, the major took the unwarrantable liberty of kissing me; I openly avowed my dislike to their

their "playful gaieties," and sat down disconcerted and out of humour.

"A loud laugh from the ladies, a sort of sarcastic smile of contempt from the major, and the words—"My poor dear little prude," with a tap on the neck, from my lord, was by no means calculated to restore my spirits.—Afraid, however, of giving him offence, I passed by unnoticed the rudeness of my companions, but I felt indignant and mortified.

"A fortnight more passed away unmarked by any particular incident. I was often obliged to join in the mirth of the party, but had not *much* to complain of on the score of undue liberties, though often a witness to very improper ones, in my eyes.

"The time had now long elapsed since I was in expectation of hearing from my parents; Lord C— resented their silence highly, and in a more decisive manner than I had ever remarked on any other occasion, insisted, that I should not degrade his honour

nour and rank by any further applications, and to this requisition I gave an unqualified assent.

"We had been married nearly two months, when the enthusiasm of passion a little abated. I began to feel uneasy in my situation, thus passing under a false name, in the opinion of our servants degraded into the mistress of Lord C—, and concealed from the eyes of the public, that no suspicion of the marriage should ever reach the ears of our dying uncle.—I wondered his constitution should hold out so long; but I was too delicate to make frequent enquiries of his health, though anxiously watching for information from my lord.

"One morning he entered my apartment with a countenance so discomposed, and a manner altogether so disordered, that I felt too much alarmed to speak, or demand what untoward accident thus ruffled his temper.—He threw himself into a chair by

my

my side, pressed my hand to his bosom, and seemed struggling for words.

"For Heaven's sake, my Lord, speak!" I exclaimed.

"Speak!" returned he, "Oh! my love, what can I say to prepare you for an unexpected blow, that wounds me to the soul, and which, I know, will deeply afflict you?"

"My parents are dead!" I cried, shuddering with terror.

"Not that I know of," resumed he, "but if you are thus agitated for them, how will you support a separation from me?"

"Those dreadful words seemed to annihilate me;—what I said I do not now recollect, for my brain seemed confused.

"He then clasped me in his arms,—"Yes," said he, "we must part;—but, I trust, only for a very short space of time.—The doctors, confound them! have persuaded my dying uncle to try the south of France, and he, poor debilitated, childish old man, has eagerly adopted their advice; though

though apparently the least fatigue will destroy him.—He proposes to set off in two days, and insists upon my attendance.—I ventured to oppose this plan as far as I dared, but he was offended, and after having, for more than two years given up my time and inclinations to his pleasure, now to risk the loss of his fortune by a fruitless opposition, would be the height of madness; particularly as in every human probability, the attempt at this journey is more likely to accelerate his death, than add a day to his existence."

"While Lord C— was speaking, I sat silent, the image of despair. He again folded the warm statue, as he called me, to his heart.—"I know what must be your feelings," said he, "by the painful turbulence of my own;—but, my beloved girl, recover your spirits, a few weeks, or more probably a few days, will restore me to your arms, never, never to part again!"

"A

"A burst of tears relieved my over-charged heart; to repeat the tender scene that ensued is unnecessary, since all was deception on his part, and a too fond credulity on mine.

"Our friends were informed of this unexpected arrangement, and with great appearance of sensibility sought to console me with an assurance that my convenience, pleasure, and comfort, should be their joint study; and all their endeavours be used to reconcile me to this inevitable misfortune.

"But, my Lord," exclaimed the major, "can you form no plan, no possible way of taking Lady C— with you?"

"My heart leaped at the question.—

"Ah! no," replied he, sorrowfully shaking his head, "it is quite *impossible*;—you are sensible, that in travelling I must be constantly with him, and likewise under the eyes of his servants.—No, we must support this terrible stroke with fortitude, it will assuredly be of short duration. I believe the

the physicians only wish him to die from them, now they can make no further advantage of his pocket; for his stomach has for some time been incapable of retaining medicine, and receives only blanc-manger, wine, and jellies."

"Oh!" returned the major, "if it is come to that, he will never reach the south of France.—Compose yourself, my dear Lady, this Quixote expedition will terminate in a few days, be assured."

"The ladies also were of a similar way of thinking, but my feelings had met a shock not easily to be overcome;—there was an undescribable pain at my heart no sophistical arguments could remove.—Alas! it was a sad presentiment of all my woes to come! though a single doubt of Lord C—'s truth and honour never once entered my head.

"However, what was inevitable I was compelled to bear,—and not to add to his well-acted distress, I assumed a resignation I was far from feeling.

"At

"At night, when retired to my pillow, a thousand horrid fears tormented my mind. —My lord *might die*, might meet with some unexpected terrible accident;—I had cause to believe I was in the family way, what would become of me should any misfortune happen to him?—He had told me the lawyers were drawing up a settlement for me.—I was so great a novice in affairs of this nature, that I believed just what I was told, that we must be married *before* any settlement could be made. This settlement was not done, I had heard of marriage certificates, but I had no such thing.

"In short I passed a sleepless night, and resolved to question his lordship on these points the following day.

"He came at a very early hour,—we were alone, but my resolution failed. I could not make the inquiry I had intended, without an implied doubt of his honour, or his life;—both tenderness and delicacy forbade

bade questions of a tendency so unpleasant to him, and the last equally operated against the least hint of my situation. I could better acquaint him with it by letter, as he was to write every day.

"Thus all my midnight resolves melted into air before the unbounded tenderness and regrets he expressed, in being for a single day separated from his *adored wife*.

"Oh! villain!—matchless villain! he still lives!—but vengeance, such as perjury deserves from that Almighty Being, whose name he had so often, so daringly insulted, will surely overtake him!—That my nerveless arm failed in its desperate purpose, I now bow with humble gratitude to Heaven!—I sinned in the intention, and my life will, I trust, expiate the crime.—That my soul is preserved from the actual commission of murder, I owe to the restraining hand of a gracious Providence.

"Yet, wretch as I am! have I not destroyed my mother?—No matter what the instrument

instrument of death, if the effect is the same;—sorrow, disgrace, and filial ingratitude sent her to a premature grave. A dagger's point might have been mercy to the sufferings of a broken heart!—Again I quit my pen, my brain is on fire!

"I must hurry on the dreadful recital of woes which language is inadequate to describe, whilst I preserve my senses.

"Lord C— left me, and the cold shiver which chilled my blood as I embraced him for the last time, was nature's warning of the misery that awaited me for the remaining days of my existence.

"My associates, far from sympathising, attempted to ridicule the grief and terror which overwhelmed me.—Fiends! they exulted over the credulous victim of villany. I withdrew to my apartment, I could not rejoin them that night.—Mrs. Harwood knocked at my chamber door before she retired to rest. I begged to be excused seeing her, I was preparing for my bed; she

wished me a good night, and hoped I should be quite well the next morning.

"What a night did I pass! I was both shocked at, and ashamed of the excess of my grief.—I began to feel sensible of my extreme weakness, and resolved, if possible, to subdue the poignancy of my feelings, that I might not appear ridiculously fond and despairing, in the eyes of my companions. I descended to breakfast, on the first summons with a studied composure; but my countenance, pale and wan, and eyes dimmed with floods of tears, too plainly evinced the tortures of my heart to be disguised by the thin covering of affected ease.

"I saw them look at each other, that is, the two ladies, for the major had not yet made his appearance; I observed, also, a kind of suppressed smile on the features of Mrs. Bateman.—I should have mentioned, that this lady had been an inmate of my house for the last fortnight, at the request of Lord C—, who wished to procure for me cheerful

cheerful companions, while his uncle engrossed so large a portion of those hours his heart would have devoted to its possessor;—and it was his particular request to them, not to quit me until he returned.

"I rather submitted to than enforced his desire by any solicitation on my part;—the ladies had both lost ground in my esteem, I could approve neither of their manners nor their conversation, and yet had not the courage openly to avow my dislike, or renounce their society.

"And here I cannot but observe, how absolutely requisite it is to train up young people to acquire early in life a habit of judging for themselves, of weighing causes and effects, and without a presumptuous tenacity, be capable of declaring and supporting their own opinions, until convinced by better arguments, that they are really erroneous.

"That imbecility of mind which submits, because it has not courage to oppose

sentiments and actions from which both its judgment and feeling shrinks with disgust and abhorrence, will ever be the sport of base, designing souls; will gradually sink into a mortifying insignificance, and become a reluctant associate in vice, for want of that proper self-possession and noble confidence which should stimulate its powers of exertion in the cause of virtue.

"More unhappy beings of both sexes are drawn into vicious courses through a false shame of incurring ridicule, a blamable weakness, not daring to oppose the witty, the gay, and licentious, than from any natural propensity to vice, or real want of intellect.

"Dearly have I purchased a conviction of this incontrovertible truth.—Had my mind, early in life been stamped with more energy and general knowledge of the world, with courage and precision to judge of characters, and with modest confidence to speak my opinion and decide on the choice

choice of my own companions, I might then have escaped from the wicked arts, the vile schemes of those wretches who were hired for my destruction.

"But how I digress.—Alas! even now I shudder to enter on the detail of unexampled villany, to which I was sacrificed, without remorse, and without either consciousness, or power of resistance on my part.

"Major Freeland came in soon after breakfast, and being, as he gaily said, Lord C—'s double, with a charge delegated to him, to contribute in every possible way to my amusement and comfort, he was come to propose going to the opera in the evening.—"You," said he, "are yet a stranger to that delightful entertainment.—Lord C— was fearful of being seen there with you, as the insatiable curiosity of women, on seeing a new and charming face with him, might have led them to questions and investigations he

was by no means prepared to gratify.—But I am an unimportant personage, and perfectly competent to evade impertinent enquiries, should any such be made to me, therefore, ladies, what say ye for the opera?"

"I replied, with truth,—"That *I* greatly preferred passing my evenings at home; I could derive no pleasure from amusements in which my lord had no share."

"This sentiment was voted a bore, by the whole trio;—"it is the dove-like fondness of a country wife, afraid to trust herself beyond the boundaries of her household gods, for fear she should contaminate the adoration due to one idol only," said Mrs. Bateman, with a loud laugh.

"Mrs. Harwood threw up *her* head, and with an ironical smile assured me,—I might trust to the experience of two widows, that the turtle-wife who always clung to the side of her lord, and gave a tacit

tacit expectation that *he* should as fondly adhere to her's, would very soon weaken, if not wholly destroy that affection which fettered the freedom of action, and changed the soft bands of love into the galling chains of matrimony.

"Come, come," added she, "you must amuse yourself, we engaged with my lord that you should do so; believe me, he is a man of sense and spirit, he confides in your love, and is not such a novice as to wish, or expect you should become a mope, simply because he is taking a short journey.—To the opera *you must go*, and you will thank us for this little exertion to set aside your absurd *sober* plan."

"Too weak and irresolute to defend my own judgment and inclinations, against the ridicule and boasted experience of these women, I submitted, though with an ill grace, to their imperious requisition; and was conducted to that scene of fashion and pleasure, at the usual hour.

"The major had obtained a box, and we were very commodiously seated. I will not deny that I was fascinated, enchanted by the music, dancing, and scenery; the house was very brilliant, the company highly fashionable, and the altogether had such an effect upon my senses, doating on music, that I looked with uncommon complacency on my companions, and no longer regretted having sacrificed my inclinations to their better judgment.

"On our return we sat down to a very elegant supper, ordered by Mrs. Harwood, who condescended to direct my household, until I had a proper establishment fixed. I was in the highest spirits imaginable, once, and only once, I wished Lord C— had been in our party; my senses were in a tumult of pleasure, I declared the opera should be my favourite resort when free to act as I liked, for there could not be any other place of amusement so captivating so truly divine!—In short, I was in raptures, and

and my spirits seemed to electrify my three companions.

" It was near four in the morning when I retired to rest; I was so overpowered by drowsiness that I have scarcely recollection of being undressed, and getting into bed.—Nelly afterwards told me, I did not speak three words; and after she left me, meeting Mrs. Harwood on the stairs, she bid her not disturb me till I should ring, my spirits being exhausted and requiring rest.

" To the transactions of this most horrible night, I declare, with the most solemn appeal to Heaven, I was wholly unconscious, and must doubtless have taken some powerful opiate.—Judge then, you who love virtue, and have honour and truth in your bosoms—judge what must have been my feelings, when I awoke and found myself in the arms of Major Freeland!

" I neither shrieked nor moved,—horror and surprise benumbed all my faculties.—As I spoke not the monster said some words,

and pressed me to his bosom;—I uttered a deadly groan, and lost my senses.

"For five days from this eventful one, I was happily unconscious of my misery; and had it pleased Heaven to have recalled me then, what days and nights of consuming anguish, bitter and unavailing sorrow, had I been preserved from.—But I was restored justly to feel the fatal effects of duplicity and filial ingratitude, that the measure of my woes might be full, and proportionate to the extent of my guilt.

"I was humbled to the dust, and punished by the very man for whom I had forsaken and wounded the hearts of the best and most indulgent of parents;—for whom I had forgotten all self-respect, and abased myself in the eyes of the world, wickedly and voluntarily!—Here I must pause."

CHAPTER

## CHAPTER VIII.

———"Ye lying vanities of life
Where are you now, and what is your amount?
We come into the world only to die in sorrow!
We gain a little that we may lose it with bitter
Tears, and we engage our hearts, only, that those
Hearts may break in misery and regret!"

"WHEN my reason returned, I felt myself as weak as an infant; I opened my eyes to behold Mrs. Harwood and Mrs. Bateman sitting near the bed.—With a shudder that agitated my whole frame, I closed them again, saying,—"Go, go, leave me to die!"—for in the same moment recollection and horror burst upon my brain, the

the dreadful past rose to my terrified senses in its most hideous form.

"Dear Madam," said Mrs. Bateman, holding my struggling hand, "pray compose yourself; we are rejoiced to see you restored to us, your *sudden* and *unaccountable illness* has frightened us exceedingly, but now we have every thing to hope,—at present we leave you with your servant."

"Yes, my sweet friend," added Mrs. Harwood, "you shall not be oppressed, 'tis sufficient for our happiness that your senses are restored;—by and by we will visit you again."

"I made no reply, they withdrew, and I was left with Nelly. She requested me to take some drops, I opened my eyes once again to the light, again I shuddered, she repeated her request.

"Tell me," said I, "how long have I been ill?—What has happened to me—have I had a horrid dream, or am I a wretch for ever?"

"Indeed,

"Indeed, Ma'am," answered she, "you have been very ill, and how it happened no one can tell, for 'tis five days ago now, the very day after my lord went away, that I was awoke just about day break, as I could discern the things in my room, by the violent ringing of your bell, so I starts up, and just throwing on a bit of cloaths runned in, when, Lord help me, there was you lying, to my thoughts, as dead as a stone. So I called up the ladies, and thought I should have died myself with the fright;—and so, when you was recovered by vinegar and such things, you raved and talked like one wild;—and so a doctor was sent for, and he said it was a fever of the brain,—and ever since, till this blessed day, you have been mortal bad indeed.—But the doctor said, last night, you would recover, and so, thank God, you will now soon get well, and all your horrid fancies will be at an end!"

"I

"I heard her without interruption. I tried to believe the dreadful event that pressed upon my brain must be an illusion of my senses; but the stronger my reason returned, the more I was convinced it had too certainly happened.—Memory, too faithful, retraced the horrid moment when I saw Major Freeland, and heard the few words he addressed to me.—Death or madness, at this recollection, would have been a blessing, but the crisis was past—I was restored to life and misery.

"I made very little reply to Nelly, who was curious to know how I was taken so suddenly ill.—I desired to be left alone for some hours and she retired.

"I then retraced every circumstance in my mind.—The wretch who had dishonoured me could not have remained in the house without the knowledge of Mrs. Harwood or Nelly.—The latter I entirely exculpated, the former, I began to fear, was a most infamous woman.—But, however

ever ruined and betrayed, Lord C— was now lost to me for ever,—never could I raise my eyes to his again!—Oh! how dreadful were my agonies, how impossible to attempt a description of the horrors which took possession of my mind under a conviction so terrible!

"After passing some hours in misery unspeakable, I suddenly determined to have an explicit conversation with Mrs. Harwood.—I rang my bell and desired to see her,—first taking some drops to support the violence of my emotions.—She came, and addressed me in a voice of kindness, in the most soothing and friendly terms, while I was struggling for composure and resolution.

"At length I fixed my eyes firmly upon her, and asked,—"Where is Major Freeland?"

"Astonished at a question so abrupt, her cheeks were flushed with crimson, and her features were so agitated, as immediately

ately to convince me she was the most abandoned of women.

"I repeated my question with all the force my weakness would permit, adding, sternly,—"There is no occasion for any more deceit or evasion,—you well know the cause of my illness.—You know Major Freeland passed the night here, after we came from the opera, and I now demand of you, a succinct account of what are *his views*, and what *you* propose to yourself from the misery and dishonour into which I have been betrayed through your means? Speak, Mrs. Harwood, for once be sincere; what is to become of the unhappy abused wife of Lord C—?"

"She appeared petrified by an address so unexpected and solemn, that thrown off her guard, she only said,—"Major Freeland is a man of honour, he adores you.—You have nothing to apprehend from Lord C—, *he has deserted you.*"

"I

"I repeated her last words, turned instantly sick, and fainted.

"When, by their too officious endeavours, I was again restored to life and memory, Mrs. Harwood ordered Nelly to retire, then seeming to collect a firmness of manner, she said,—"To impose upon you longer is unnecessary, Lord C— has no claims upon you, your marriage is not valid, and he is compelled to renounce the union.—You will see him no more; but he has left you a settlement of a hundred a year, and consigned *his right* to your heart over to Major Freeland, who, I repeat, is a man of honour, of large fortune, and who will immediately ensure to you four hundred a year for life, and will accompany you abroad, or wherever you choose, to reside, until his ardent affection has superseded the fickle Lord C— in your heart.—Here is a letter from his lordship, I leave it with you, and I hope you will

soon

soon see your own interest, and receive the major agreeably to his wishes."

"The vile woman might have talked on for hours, I should not have interrupted her; every word penetrated to my soul, but amazement and terror impeded every attempt at articulation,—she laid the letter on the bed and withdrew.

"I must draw a veil over my sufferings.—That my senses did not a second time fall a sacrifice to my unprecedented wrongs, I doubtless owe, in a great measure to the excess of them.—Indignant horror took possession of all my faculties, and for some time benumbed every sense of speech or action.

"At length I awoke from the stupor which oppressed me. I eagerly caught up the letter, in which was enclosed the settlement she spoke of, and read the following lines:———

"'TIS with pain I lament the fatal necessity that compels me to restore

*your*

*your freedom*, and tears me from you.—I never deceived you in respect to my uncle, on whom I am entirely dependant, and who would instantly disinherit me had I really married a woman whose rank and fortune were beneath the dignity of my birth and his expectations.

"Madly in love with you, I had no resource but a *pretended marriage*. Had my uncle then died, my fondness for you might have induced me to legalize it;—but he is now in a state of convalescence, may live many years, and is going to reside abroad for two or three years at least.—I am compelled to attend him,—we shall meet no more!—This I should the more deeply regret, did I not know the passionate admiration of Major Freeland, who has not only assured me of his protection but of a handsome settlement, if he is so happy as to obtain your acquiescence with his plans. As deception can now avail nothing, I frankly confess, no letters were ever forwarded

warded to your parents; I destroyed those you wrote, which is a fortunate circumstance, for so violent is the major's attachment, that it is by no means improbable but he may be induced to marry you, and then a reconciliation with your parents may be effected without disgrace or any knowledge of circumstances between us.

"Be not displeased with Mrs. Harwood; she is inclined to be sincerely your friend; and *her* character is so equivocal in the world, that she is received into genteel society, and her acquaintance will not injure *your character*. Be assured I leave you with regret, compelled by imperious circumstances which cannot be resisted, and such as I was not prepared to expect on my first attachment to you.—Your happiness will be always dear to me, and should you ever want a friend, you will assuredly, at all times, find one in

"C—.

"P.S. In

"P. S. In this is enclosed a trifling settlement as a small independence; and a note for two hundred pounds for present emergencies,—but I have settled every pecuniary demand with Mrs. Harwood to this day.—Had more been in my power, more I would have done."

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"What I felt on reading this letter can never be conceived but by an unhappy being in similar circumstances.—I was not married legally,—my parents had to this hour been ignorant of my life or death, honour or dishonour.—My silence must have confirmed their sense of my ingratitude and wickedness.—I was deserted, turned over, like an infamous creature, to the licentious wishes of another profligate, whose baseness had proved the vileness of his heart and principles!

"Such were the dreadful heart-breaking recollections that pressed upon my mind, and maddened my brain!—I laid for some hours

hours in a state verging on distraction, and more than once meditated on self-destruction. But Heaven graciously preserved me from that sin, that I might suffer on earth the punishment I so justly merited for the premature death of a tender mother, the disgrace heaped upon the head of a respectable father, and the dishonour brought upon myself by my own criminal and weak credulity.

"I was left a considerable time to myself before Nelly returned; she then gave me a medicine which shortly after threw me into a composed sleep for some hours, and when I awoke all the confused images which had disturbed my head were fled,—I was more composed, but more internally wretched.

"Mrs. Harwood and Mrs. Bateman came to congratulate me on my servant's report of my quietude.—I said little more than that I wished to be alone for the present,—they retired, and Nelly informed me there

there, was company with them in the drawing-room.

"It was evening when the physician came; he seemed surprised at the perfect restoration of my senses, and requested I might be kept quiet for fear of a relapse by any sudden effect.

"In this state I continued for four days evidently getting better, and on the last day was able to leave my bed.

"Mrs. Harwood had as yet not spoken on the subject of Lord C—'s letter, and I deferred entering on it till I had strength of intellect to bear all the information I wished to obtain.

"One morning, when I was sitting up, she came alone, and I saw by her countenance she had much to say, though embarrassed in what manner to open the conversation. I was, therefore, the first to speak, and desired she would inform me who was the person that married me to Lord C—?—This was her answer:—

"Neither

"Neither his name nor person are known to me, for I never saw him before nor since.—I thought him a clergyman. Circumstances not to be foreseen or expected, the recovery of the Earl of M——, compelled Lord C— to acknowledge to me the deceit he had been guilty of;—he dared not hazard a legal marriage while his uncle lived, and was too madly in love to wait the slow progression of life or death. But he assured me, that had his uncle died, he really would have married you.—The contrary took place;—a sudden convalescence, and a resolution, no less sudden, immediately to go abroad, completely overset all Lord C—'s plans, and obliged him to relinquish the happiness he had wished and hoped for.—This, Madam, is the real truth."

"'Tis hardly possible," I replied, very calmly, "that this specious tale should be true;—but admitting it to be so, I am convinced it is not *all the truth* you could tell.

Your

Your own share in the deceptive marriage you have carefully concealed, and would have me believe the discovery of it to you was of late date. I am not now so easily imposed upon, my eyes are open too late, to all the artful and base proceedings in this house;—I have paid dear, dear indeed for my experience and knowledge, but you can no longer deceive me."

"I request, Madam," said she, haughtily, "that you will not implicate me in any transactions between you and Lord C—. I have condescended from compassionate motives, to interest myself for you; and even the paltry settlement which his lordship has ensured to you, was wrung from him by my importunities. It is a mere bagatelle to be sure, yet it is something; and I am commissioned to tell you, that it will be your own fault, if you do not obtain ten times that sum from one of the most liberal of men, who scorns deceit, and is superior to dependance on others."

"I understand you perfectly," I replied; "it was necessary that I should be sacrificed, that I should be degraded, abused, and irreparably wronged, to bring me on a level with those who have basely contrived my ruin. At present, Mrs. Harwood, I can talk no more on this subject, I feel my head disordered again. Leave me, Madam, to reflection; and be assured you leave me to as much misery as human nature can support."

"I saw by her countenance, that the composed manner in which I spoke, gave her hopes of success in her schemes; for her features relaxed from their haughty expression, and she left me with a civility bordering on kindness.

"It would be a vain attempt to describe the various feelings of my heart, and the disorder of my mind. One idea only dwelt forcibly on the latter, a determination to quit that fatal house, the grave of my peace, and of my honour; but as I had no

no doubt that every movement would be watched, and my intention prevented if known, I had no alternative but to bear with apparent calmness the presence of those women, who were unquestionably instrumental to my destruction, that they might be thrown off their guard during my convalescence, and not suspect my intention to escape from them.

" I was at a loss in what light to consider the seeming affectionate attendance of Nelly.—She had, to gratify me, deceived the best of masters and mistresses—she had proved herself devoid of principle, by accepting bribes to destroy their peace;—self-interest, therefore, was doubtless the leading feature in her character, and to that she was as likely to sacrifice me now, as she had formerly been to assist me in deceiving and abandoning my much injured parents.

" How torturing, how humiliating were those reflections !—She had been seduced

from her duty through my errors, and now I could no longer repose confidence in her integrity!—She that had once deceived, might deceive again; such doubts must ever dwell on the minds of confederates in nefarious actions, for where there is no principle, there can be no reliance. I felt, bitterly felt, all the painful consequences of my unpardonable defection from duty and self-respect; and, it was possible, that the mind of this unfortunate girl was corrupted by my example, and *her* future errors might be added to the intolerable weight of conscious guilt in my own bosom.

"The distraction that followed the soul-harrowing retrospection of the many evils attendant on my first deviation from rectitude, was beyond endurance;—could it be conveyed by language to the thoughtless, the gay, and fluttering young girls, who dance fearlessly on the edge of a precipice, from whence one false step must inevitably precipitate them into a fatal vortex,

vortex, where their peace, their honour, their fame, and every hope of domestic happiness, is engulphed for ever! — Oh, could my miserable fate ever reach their ears, and be impressed on their bosoms, the gradation of *my guilt* might warn them against that great, that irreparable error, of holding a secret correspondence with an insidious seducer; who must be devoid of honour and principle, if he seeks to degrade the object of his pretended love into a mean duplicity, a violation of the first principle in nature, the sacred duties of filial love and gratitude, and that self-respect, which is never wounded and forgotten without misery, repentance, and a torturing remorse, which will accompany them to their grave.

"Let these digressions and repetitions be pardoned, conscience, and a full heart, have drawn them from me; misery is prolix, and what I feel, I cannot but write.

"I resume my narrative.—In consequence of the resolutions I had formed, I endeavoured to tranquillize my spirits; and when my servant returned, I saw that she examined my countenance with an appearance of interest. I asked if there was any company below.

"Only Mrs. Bateman," she replied, "and she is no company neither, because she lives here now I think, and the major, Ma'am; and dear me, his valey says, *he* is nephew to a lord too, and most mortal rich, many thousands in a year, and nobody to care for, his lord uncle can't hurt him—and he is as generous as a prince. And—and———" She stopped.

"And what?" asked I.

"Why, Ma'am, Mr. Symes said, that his master was distractedly in love with you, and wished he was King of England for your sake, to punish your enemies, and then make you his queen. Oh, dear, he is the very best gentleman in all the world; he

he is so glad you are better, and does so wish to see you, that I hope you will let him come up to your dressing room soon, —it will make him so happy, and he does so wish to make *you happy*, and not keep you here in this dull place, where one sees nothing. Mr. Symes says he will take me to plays and shews—to the tower to see the lions, and all them sort of savage things. Oh, I hope you will soon be quite well!"

"I had permitted her to run on, that I might adduce my own conclusions from the tenor of her sentiments; and was now pretty well convinced she was quite in the major's interest. My soul sickened at the idea; but I struggled to overcome my emotions, and coolly answered:—

"But suppose, Nelly, I should chuse to go into the country till my lord's return, would you have any objection to accompany me?"

"As to my lord's return," replied she, with a pert consequential air, "*that* I believe is neither here nor there; you might mope yourself to death before he comes again, I fancy. And 'twere much better to stop in Lunnon, where you can live grand, and see every thing, have your own coach, and go among all the great people. Dear, dear Ma'am, don't think of the country, for I never desires to see it again."

"Well, Nelly, I shall think about it; when I am quite well, perhaps, I shall chuse that situation likely to make me most comfortable."

"Dear me, Ma'am, to be sure, that's the right thing, and for certain there's no comfort to be moped in the country; I detests it, and hope afore long *we* shall be as gay, as grand, and as happy, as the days are long."

"Unable to bear more, I gave her some trifling commission, in a gentle tone of voice, and sent her from me. What I endured

endured I am unable to describe. I saw that I could repose no confidence in her, that she was decidedly bought over from her attachment to me; and what mortified and tortured my very soul, was a conviction that the treachery and base desertion of Lord C—, had been made known to her, and that I was humbled and degraded in the eyes of my own servant.

"She had always been officious in calling me "my Lady," and "your Ladyship;" she had now wholly dropt it, and addressed me with a familiarity and confidence, she had never dared to use when I lived under the roof of my parents.

"Humbled as I was in my own eyes, the poignancy of this conviction overcame the assumed composure I had worn before her, and I presently lost my senses.

"How long they deserted me I know not; on the return of my reason, I found myself on the floor, my clothes covered with blood, from a violent bleeding at my

nose, and which in all probability preserved me from a delirium. It appeared that I had struck my nose in falling, as it swelled greatly; but the bleeding was very trivial when I discovered my situation.

"I recovered my seat with some difficulty; and confess I then regretted my return to life, without foreseeing the fatal termination of my days, or supposing it possible I could endure a hundreth part of the miseries which I was fated to experience.—But murmur not, thou unhappy wretch, for *thou hast deserved to suffer!*—May those sufferings purify thy soul, and obtain mercy!

"Compelled by dire necessity to assume an appearance of calmness, while my whole soul was in tumults, I succeeded in deceiving the base women into a belief that I should shortly be reconciled to all their infamous views, and become a willing associate in vice.

"I

"I still kept my apartment for four days, because I found time was requisite to restore my strength, and also to throw them off their guard. The ladies visited me twice a day, I bore with them, and the languor on my spirits was an excuse for my little inclination to talk.

"Once Mrs. Bateman said, — "The poor major is extremely miserable; he will not credit our report of your convalescence, but is impatient to throw himself at your feet."

"It was with the utmost difficulty I repressed the indignant rage that swelled my tortured bosom;—she looked for an answer,—I faintly said,—"Not yet, Madam, I am unable, at present, to see any but yourselves."

"I observed the exchange of significant looks, and suppressed smiles, and they soon took leave with encreased kindness; no doubt in haste to convey my answer to their employer.

"It

"It was the fifth day from Mrs. Harwood's explanation, when in the morning Nelly informed me the ladies were going out to dine, and from thence to the opera.

"My heart leaped at the welcome intelligence;—now was the so much wished for opportunity to make my escape, and I determined to avail myself of it.—I pretended a violent head ache, and after dinner, told Nelly to bring me a cup of strong coffee, which I should take, and try to obtain a few hours rest, without having any tea; desiring she would not disturb me till I rang the bell for her attendance.

"This she readily promised, and I had no doubt but servants in a house like that would seek their own amusement when left to themselves, and wholly forget a person confined to a sick apartment.

"It was my first thought to leave the bond and all other papers relative to Lord C—, with the note for two hundred pounds, behind me, and a letter expressive of my feelings,

feelings, and appropriate to my wrongs;—but on reflection, I knew not what use the infamous Mrs. Bateman might make of those papers, or how far they might hereafter be essential towards my own justification. I therefore secured them, with what linen I could take with convenience, and a black silk dress from my own trunk, which had never been seen by any of the family.

"The back parlour had folding doors into the garden, at the bottom of which was a gate that led into a lane, and from thence across some fields to another high road. This gate had a draw-back lock and two bolts, consequently there was no difficulty to open it inside, and from thence I hoped to escape.

"Not to dwell on particulars, every thing succeeded to my wish; I pulled the gate after me, and walked as fast as my weakness would permit.

"I

"I gained the high road almost in the same moment that a stage coach was passing;—the driver observing, I suppose, a bundle in my hand, stopped, and asked if I wanted a place?—I replied in the affirmative.—When seated, he demanded where I wished to stop?—I was speechless, for I knew not the name of any street, or where the stage put up.—He repeated the question, adding,—"I go on to the Bank with these here gentry in the coach."

"Very well," said I, "you will set me down there also."

"By this time it began to be dusk; a gentleman and two ladies were my companions, but I was too desirous to conceal my own face to make any observations on *their* persons, and was extremely rejoiced at the encreasing darkness which screened me from the examination I dreaded.

"When the coach arrived at its destined place, we all got out, and paid the fare demanded.—My companions civilly wished me

me a good night, and I was left standing in the street, without knowing where to go, or a single being by name, in all this great and busy metropolis.

"I walked on mechanically through two or three streets, and at length reached the Strand.—To describe my sensations, or the dreadful reflections which crowded upon my mind, is wholly impossible; whether it was that my agitations had an effect upon my manner of walking, or that I betrayed a fear of every human being who approached me, and so drew on the notice I was so anxious to shun, I know not, but I found that I was stared at by the women, and every moment addressed impertinently by the men.

"What was to become of me—where should I find a resting place?—Oh! how bitter, how heart piercing the conviction, that I had no home, no friend, not even an acquaintance, to whom I could apply, or hope for shelter from the storms of life!—

Dishonoured,

Dishonoured, disgraced, and a fugitive, who would receive me into their house, or afford rest and covering to my weak and trembling frame?—Gracious Heaven! what a lost creature, in a few short months, was the once idolized daughter of the best and most respectable of parents!

"The moment their wrongs and my ingratitude darted into my mind, a sudden impulse determined me to return, to humble myself at their feet, to confess—to deplore my guilt, solicit one forgiving word, and then *to die*. Yes, I resolved on death, for life I found intolerable; I could not support self-reproach, remorse, and the cruel desertion of that barbarous man to whom I had given my heart and my confidence; and for whom I had sacrificed every sacred duty impressed in the bosom of a female, and become a wretch detestable in my own eyes, and an outcast from the world.

"With

"With these thoughts despair took possession of my soul. I walked on more swiftly, until impeded by a loaded stage coach, driving into the yard of the Golden-Cross inn.—I was so near being run over, that a man hastily catching my arm, I fell back, and struck my head with violence against the stones.

"Stunned by the blow and sudden fright, I lay to all appearance senseless. The humane man, who had endeavoured to save me from a more terrible accident, had me conveyed into the house, where I was very soon restored to recollection, though not capable of articulation for several minutes.

"A surgeon had been sent for, who, after examining my head, gave his opinion that no material injury had taken place; a great quantity of hair, with a thick slouched bonnet, had, in all probability, preserved me from a fatal fracture.

"In

" In a few hours I seemed perfectly recovered;—a young woman in the room informed me it was past ten o'clock, and asked if I chose to send for any friend,—would I have a hackney coach—or take any refreshment?

" These questions drew on an immediate recurrence to the dreadful forlorn circumstances which overwhelmed me.—I had no friend to send for,—no home to go to.—I threw a melancholy look on the girl, which seemed to affect her, and judging perhaps that my senses were not yet in a settled state, she pressed me to have some refreshment. — I merely said, — " Some wine and water, and a crust," when instantly a gush of tears I could no longer suppress, greatly relieved both my head and my heart.

" By the time she returned, I began to think it would be best to ask for a bed there, saying, that I came from the country,

try, and would not, at so late an hour intrude upon my friends.

"The girl readily assured me of a bed, adding, that a bason of good gruel, with some toast, should be brought, after I was in bed, to compose me to rest.

"To this considerate proposal I acquiesced, and desired to be shewn to my appropriated apartment.

"When she re-entered to say it was ready, and I rose to follow her, I asked for my parcel.

"I have seen none," said she, "no bundle or parcel was brought in with you; and if you had such a thing, it must have been dropped when you fell, and perhaps stolen by one of the crowd."

"I sank back in the chair, exclaiming with uplifted hands,—"My God! what is now to become of me!!!"

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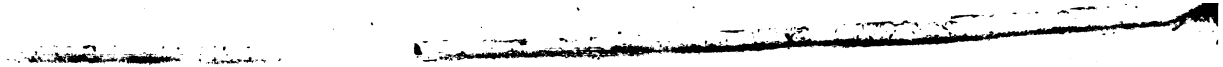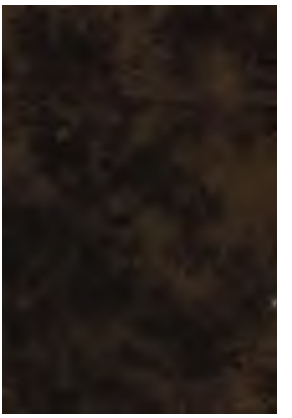
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